

As I saw It
BY

HARVEY ARGYLE

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As I Saw It

By
HARVEY ARGYLE *[ps. for*
John Jackson McIntire
J.G.R.]



STORIES ILLUSTRATED



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BY JOHN JACKSON MCINTIRE

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PREFACE

I have no apologies to offer for writing this book. Like Topsy, who "just grew," I wrote as I saw it.

HARVEY ARGYLE.

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INCIDENTS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN MISSOURI

In reading over the personal memoirs of U. S. Grant, in Vol. 1, page 252, some incidents of the Civil War in Missouri, not touched upon by him, except in a merely allusive way, were brought to my mind, and as I am sure they have never appeared in print, I will endeavor to relate them as I saw them.

History tells us of battles fought and number of men killed and wounded, but it does not tell us of the camp life of the soldier nor the pathetic, heroic and amusing incidents by which every battle or skirmish is attended.

In the year 1861, some companies of raw recruits were ordered from different localities to a little town, less than fifty miles from Mexico, Missouri, which had been designated as a military post, for the purpose of receiving instructions in tactics and drill.

The company to which I belonged was organized from the boys of this village and the immediate vicinity and our captain was selected from our number.

Taken altogether, we were a motley crowd, as may readily be imagined when it is understood that we had no uniforms, that our clothing did not match, and that we were almost totally ignorant of the rudiments of military discipline. Our guns were picked up from the neighboring villages and the country around ; they were of all makes, sizes and shapes. We had to have them, we had to be drilled, and we could not drill without a gun, you know.

I was at that time, like many others of my comrades, very young. The ages of the men of my company ranged from sixteen to twenty-four years, I, myself, being seventeen years old.

We knew nothing of military discipline ; we had grown up as wild and free as the jack rabbits that roamed the broad unsettled prairies.

In order to make us useful the Department sent some brand new officers to our little village to drill us. They were young and handsome, wore new blue suits of clothing, bright shining sabers hanging at their sides, and pretty little straps on

their shoulders. It was not very long before trouble began in a quiet way.

The new officers were invited out to suppers and parties and entertained by the young ladies, whom, previous to their advent on the scene, we had claimed as our sweethearts. So we made up our minds to hedge off that proposition.

Brass buttons and epaulets have always had an unaccountable attraction for the feminine mind, and thus it came about that we of the rank and file were almost completely ostracized from dances and all the social amusements. We could only go to the young ladies' homes when there was no danger of encountering any of our superiors.

Finally, the officers decided to give a ball. They rented a hall and issued invitations to all the leading men of the town and their families. In the meantime, however, we bought up all the carriages in the place and all the local music, so that our "dress parade soldiers," as we called them, were obliged to send fifteen miles away to order carriages to take our girls to that ball and also to engage an imported string band. Then thinking, no doubt, that some of the men would succeed in obtruding their unwelcome presence upon them, the doors of the hall were

locked and the windows fastened down. We could walk around the hall and hear the sweet strains of music and the merry laughter of the dancers. Get in? Oh, no!

The Southern boys were faring about the same as ourselves with regard to their sweethearts, and we had solicited their aid; so, on the night of the lock-out at the hall we held a consultation.

Our first move was to procure a lot of cayenne pepper and goose quills, telescoping the quills one upon the other until we had a hollow tube six or eight inches long. We obtained as many of these quills as there were apertures in the hall, then loaded them with the cayenne pepper and blew it in through the keyholes and under the doors and windows. It was not long before all avenues of exit were thrown wide open and a number of very angry guests made their appearance. Of course we were nowhere to be found.

Instead of this escapade helping our case it only made it worse. The girls began to tell around what excellent warriors these officers were; they were so thoroughly trained that they could whip their weight in wildcats—in fact to attack them, except with well-trained soldiers and in superior numbers, was useless. Such were the

exalted opinions that our sweethearts had of them. And the only possible way to change that opinion was by conniving some kind of a demonstration where no one would be hurt physically.

A good portion of our company and some of the boys in the immediate neighborhood of the Southerners, who were friends of ours, began to have it noised through the country that our post was to be attacked by the enemy. Reports to this effect were sent in daily. The officers in charge drilled their men harder and faster; the ammunition and accoutrements were looked after with a sharper eye; the big doors of the freight depot were thrown wide open and barricaded with freight of all description for breastworks; and it was decided that in the event of an attack the troops should at once take refuge within the improvised fort.

As these disturbing reports became more frequent we began to hear men of other companies at the post tell what they would do in a fight; how they would annihilate the enemy, and how they would shoot as long as life lasted.

This bold talk and the preparations for defense made the young officers feel more secure, and they became more reckless in their boasting.

While this was going on the boys of our neighborhood who had been affected by the lock-out were busily engaged gathering all the jacks, jennies, mules and old horses south of the village, until they had accumulated one hundred and fifty or two hundred head. During the time our friends were thus engaged we procured from St. Louis a number of packages of the largest firecrackers obtainable. Watching our opportunity, we managed to get those in the secret on picket duty this particular night.

Warnings having been circulated so frequently of a contemplated attack on the village, the officers finally became indifferent and relaxed in a measure their vigilance. That was just what we wanted.

One night, after dark, our band of animals were driven away around the town, right on the opposite side from where they had been reared, to a corral which we had secured; and every jack and jennie, horse and mule, had firecrackers attached to mane and tail in such a manner that by setting off one they would keep bursting until all were exploded. When each quadruped had his quota of explosives properly attached we lined them up, and about eleven o'clock the men and boys who

were engaged for that purpose ignited the pyrotechnics and turned the fiery steeds loose through the village. The lights were extinguished, and the terrible clatter of two hundred hoofs, added to the flash and roar of the firecrackers, sounded very much like a rifle battle. The only casualty, however, was one of Stone's best jacks killed in front of the depot. All the pickets on duty, understanding the game, fired into the air and ran for the depot to see the fun.

Those self-declared heroes had forgotten about their avowed intentions to die as such, and more of them ran under the depot than into it. It was a dark night, and as they were only able to see the flash and hear the noise of the infuriated beasts and the explosions of the firecrackers, the officers on watch lost no time in despatching to an old lady's house, where the rest of the "dress parade soldiers" were being entertained by our sweethearts, to advise them that the town was attacked by a large force; that we were undoubtedly all lost; and to save themselves if they could. We did hear that some of them ran under the bed, but we did not hear any more of the bravery of those men from our sweethearts.

In some way unknown to us this prank leaked out, and as it was the men of our company who were the principal instigators of it, we were sent off into Calloway County near the enemy's lines, to a place called Hickory Grove Schoolhouse, our orders being to watch the enemy and report their movements. But the real object in sending us there was that it was hoped that we would encounter our adversaries and be thrashed to a finish.

With nothing but occasional drill and everyday camp duty for a lot of mischievous boys, one can readily imagine how heavily time would hang on our hands. Only a captain with all the qualities of a perfect man could hold our love and respect as ours did. He was brave and kind, at the same time firm, but did not want to see every little infraction of rules the boys might commit. And in return for his consideration of us we esteemed and honored him and would go to any extent to grant his slightest wish.

There was a little village by the name of Concord, situated about a mile and a half from where we were encamped at Hickory Grove Schoolhouse. In some way or other the boys got word there was to be a dance there one Saturday

night, and several of us concluded we would go without permission, for we knew we could not get off if we asked.

But how to get out of camp with our horses was a hard problem for us to solve; besides, I did not see how I could go unless I succeeded in borrowing a horse, as mine was so lame that he almost went on three legs. One of my comrades, by the name of Jenkins, said, "I can fix you with a horse." I asked him "How?" "Well," he replied, "your horse and the captain's are so much alike you can hardly tell them apart in the daytime. Now, I'll just take and tie your horse to the tree where the captain's is, and tie the captain's horse to your tree. (You must not know this, of course.) You go and saddle up your horse, and we will go through the pickets one at a time."

So we saddled up, got away from camp, and on arriving at our destination we were entertained with a rifle volley that made our hair curl. It came in such a way that we could not return by the same route we had come, but were compelled to take a trail through the woods. The path we had taken came, at one point, to within one hundred yards of the road leading to our camp,

and we stopped there to take an inventory of our casualties.

The captain's horse, being a spirited fellow, had run away with me. I had lost one shoe, a holster pistol and my hat. One or two of the horses belonging to the others had slight wounds. A fellow by the name of Roberson had one ear nearly shot off. He was a pitiable looking sight, but he jested about it—a habit he had of doing upon all occasions, it mattered not how serious.

While in this secluded little spot we heard a clatter of horses' feet coming from the direction of our encampment. We knew it was our boys, and at once decided to keep quiet and let them pass, and then slide back to our quarters before they returned. For we were aware that rifle volley had been heard by them, and that was what brought them out. Just as they got opposite our place they called a halt. We heard the captain say, "Lieutenant, take the men and dash forward, my horse is too lame." It must be remembered that he had my horse. The captain returned with two men. After the coast was clear we ventured over into the road and followed close at their heels, replaced the captain's horse, and went to our tents.

The squad returned that night from Concord, reporting that they were unable to find anyone but peaceable citizens, and that the town appeared to be asleep.

Next morning the captain was on hand to see that all his men answered to the roll-call. Roberson was almost the last to step into line, and, being a natural comedian, the patches upon his ear and on the side of his nose only added to his comical expression. And as he responded to his name in a kind of subdued tone, "I am here, Captain," it brought forth such a peal of laughter from the men as made the woods ring. The captain tried to look austere and sternly called out, "Attention!" at the same time turning his head.

There was no mention made of the incidents of the preceding night; nothing was said about shots being fired or anybody being out. Roberson was not even asked about the huge patch upon his ear; not one word was uttered by the captain with regard to his horse being lame, although he went out with a reconnoitering party the next day. We felt so much ashamed of treating him in such a manner that we were good for a long time afterwards. However, it became awfully monotonous staying at this little schoolhouse, and we began

to look around for some loop-hole through which to escape in an honorable way.

From what we heard we had formed a favorable opinion of the new Commander in Mexico, Missouri, then Colonel Grant, and we were desirous to get under his wing if we could. The captain had so expressed himself upon numerous occasions, and as we wished to make amends for the past we wanted his ambition gratified.

Therefore, a few of us were constantly on the lookout for an opportunity to bring about this longed for consummation. We determined not to take too many into our confidence, as we had done before, so only our mess of twelve men were in the secret.

About half a mile from where we encamped we had noticed that an old lady of the masculine type had a very fine lot of turkeys. Our captain's tent was adjoining ours and some of his men went out and killed two wild turkeys. They didn't do a thing but just cook and eat those turkeys in front of our very eyes and never said turkey to us once.

After this Roberson called a meeting in our tent and said, "Boys, I have it. You know the Commander at Mexico will never allow stealing."

Then he proceeded to lay his plan before us and we gladly assented to it. So away we went, down through a brushy canyon, about a quarter of a mile from where the old lady's turkeys roosted, appropriated rails from a fence near-by, and built a narrow pen four or five feet high and covered it over. The next night we carried corn from the owner's crib and took all of her turkeys and placed them in this pen. The enclosure having been built over a little stream of water, they could remain there for some time without receiving any injury, as we had placed sufficient food there to last several days. The next night, after the turkeys had been safely penned, a couple of the boys went around to the farm to buy some milk.

They took off their hats to the old lady and were exceedingly polite, for they saw she had her fighting clothes on. Having offered to pay for anything they got, she finally cooled down and invited them into the house, remarking as she did so, "Do you know that you fellows are all a pack of thieves?" Asking her to explain what she meant, she told them that some twenty-five of her turkeys had been stolen. They said they could give her some information if she promised never to tell, and to this she hastily agreed. Then

they told her to go over to the camp directly behind the captain's tent and she would see a pile of feathers there and perhaps she would recognize them as belonging to her turkeys; if so, the fowls had probably all been eaten by this time. The balance of the messes would not be so bold as to leave the feathers around where they could be seen. Before leaving they said to her, "Do not go until we get back as they might suspect us of telling you."

About four o'clock that afternoon an irate female made her appearance at the captain's tent, inspected the feathers, pronounced them to be the plumage that had belonged to her fowl, and abused the captain in a disgraceful manner. Leaving in great indignation, she went to Mexico and complained of the theft of her turkeys. The captain was commanded to report at headquarters and give an explanation of his conduct. Of course, he could not go in safety with less than fifty men, and a greater part of the mess, myself included, were among the lucky ones detailed to escort him to that place.

Upon our arrival we were lined up in front of the Commander's tent. Our captain was reprimanded, the turkey racket smoothed over and the

captain and his little band sent back the next day into seclusion to await further orders.

It was understood by the boys in the secret that while we were away and before we returned the turkeys were to be let loose. Upon the captain's arrival at the camp the old woman reappeared and on bended knees apologized for the trouble she had caused him. She stated at the same time that every one of the missing poultry had returned, and said, "Captain, I've raised turkeys nigh unto forty years and never had that happen to me before." Thereupon the captain flew into a rage, ordered the old lady under arrest, and there was another detail of fifty men appointed to escort him back to Mexico to have the stain of turkey stealing erased from his name.

On arriving there the prisoner made her explanation, and nearly all the men were closely questioned to find out what they knew of this turkey deal. They, of course, knew nothing. So the captain was ordered to return and move his camp without delay to Mexico, where his men must be disciplined.

Reaching camp, we found those on guard there in a turmoil of excitement. Reports had been

received that the rebels were in strong force in the immediate neighborhood. The men had worked all night digging trenches and building a stockade, as they were hourly expecting an attack. When the captain made enquiries of the officer in charge as to the grounds upon which he had based his surmise of an attack, he replied that scouts had discovered a large number of fresh tracks coming from the northwest, going southeast to where there was a deep canyon, heavily covered with timber, not more than three miles distant, and he believed the enemy were concentrating there for the purpose of attacking us.

I, being a sergeant, and the captain knowing that I had been all through that country before the war with hunters and surveyors, he ordered me to detail ten men and proceed at once to investigate the cause of this alarm. At the same time he despatched a courier on the fleetest-footed horse in the company to Mexico for reinforcements.

I selected ten young men of about my own age from the mess I belonged to and started out to take the trail where they had discovered the tracks. Those imprints we followed through

farms and over hills for some three miles; and then the tracks appeared to increase in numbers, there being all kinds, sizes and shapes represented.

At length we arrived at the top of a high cliff. Taking our field-glass and looking over this cliff into a beautiful valley of about fifty acres, we discovered a cluster of trees surrounding a log cabin enclosed with a post and rail fence. Here horses and mules of all descriptions were tied as thick as they could stand. There was not a man in sight, and I must say this looked suspicious. Holding a consultation, we decided to go back and take the road leading to the house, dash by under full speed, lying flat on our horses' sides opposite from the house, and as we passed by the dwelling to fire from the pummels of our saddles, if necessary. Having practised this horsemanship often, we were quite expert at it.

However, discovering that the owners of those horses were darkies attending a funeral, we rode up to the fence. I dismounted, wrote a brief despatch and sent it to the captain by one of my squad. It read as follows:

"DEAR SIR:—Took up the trail as you suggested one mile northwesterly from our camp;

followed tracks for four miles; found them increasing as we advanced. Arrived at place of concentration. Judge there are about one hundred and twenty heart-broken darkies at a nigger funeral. I remain awhile to question them and see if we can get any clue to the enemy being in this locality. Will report by roll-call this evening.

“Respectfully,

“HARVEY ARGYLE.”

Leaving my men on guard, I proceeded to the back door, where the darkies were huddled together. This shanty was situated in a valley which was part of a large tobacco plantation, and had been given to an old colored man and his blind wife by the owner for their faithful services to him in their younger days.

Years before, the master of these old slaves had bought a little darkey boy and given him into their keeping. And he had grown up under their care and had learned to love them as his own. From his bewailings over “Uncle Joe,” as he called him, I then and there wrote the following verses:

Oh, poor ole Joe is a dyin', Sam,
His life is ebbin' away,
De days ob de coon an' de 'possum, Sam,
Am gone from us dis day.

Oh, de days we worked in de tobacco field,
Dem happy days are o'er,
An' poor ole Joe is a dyin' now,
You'll neber see him more.

Oh, de ole log cabin I lub so well,
Which I built so long ago,
I'se a gwine to leabe to ole Aunt Hanna;
She was good to poor ole Joe.
It will house an' shelter de dear ole soul;
You know she's ole an' blind,
An' only a few short years are left
Dat she'll remain behind.

Oh, de 'possum an' coon we shall hunt no more,
But de skins on de cabin walls
Will remind you, Sam, ob our hunting days
Till de ole log cabin falls.
When you sit by de fire on de winter's night,
And de hickory embers glow,
You'll think ob de Christmas fire we built,
And you'll not forget ole Joe.

Den take de ole banjo from de wall,
An' sing one last ole song,
It will cheer my last sad moments, Sam,
While death is comin' along.
And when from yon ole churchyard, Sam,
You'll return to de cabin alone,
You'll comfort ole Aunt Hanna, Sam,
When poor ole Joe is gone.

So he took de ole banjo from de wall,
An' his eyes were filled with tears,
As he sang de song de ole man lubed,
De song ob happier years;
An' de darkies came from miles aroun',
An' joined in de song ob woe,
An' de tears fell down from ebery eye,
For dey dearly lubed ole Joe.

As the colored people always looked upon the Union soldiers as their friends, our presence did not disturb them in the least, and they went on paying their last tribute of love to the white-haired old man who had been for so many years their adviser and leader in corn shuckings, coon and 'possum hunts, as well as their prompter, in his younger days, at many of the dances and hoe-downs. He had also been a lover of the banjo, and played it well in his day. After paying our respects to the dead, we ourselves went away saddened.

Returning to camp about dark, we received the information that our company had been ordered to move to Mexico, and quickly following in their wake we overtook them ten miles out on the road.

The messenger whom the captain had despatched to Mexico for reinforcements was a new

recruit, an inveterate gossip, and he spread the report broadcast that the enemy had undoubtedly annihilated us by this time.

This news, of course, reached the camp from which we had been banished for that horse and firecracker racket. Overjoyed at the intelligence, they were getting ready to celebrate our signal defeat; but their rejoicing was short-lived, as they received a telegram from some of the boys saying that we had met the enemy, four times our number, had killed one hundred and fifty and captured two hundred head of their horses; that we were now safe in Mexico and several of the boys had been promoted for their bravery. In order to win we had recourse to a little strategy, hence the telegram.

I think this telegram cost four dollars, but we chipped in and paid it without a murmur. The fellows who were preparing to rejoice felt very much chagrined. Sweet revenge was ours, as the girls now called them cowards and boobies and wrote us kindly letters.

A few days after our arrival at Salt River bridge, Roberson, the comedian of the company, received a note from one of the young officers who took the leading part in our banishment

from the home post, accusing him of being the leader of all the deviltry our company got into. The words used were so brief, cold and stiff that the paper broke where he signed his name.

We camped at Salt River to guard the bridge and to be instructed in cavalry and infantry tactics; and here we received our first initiation in discipline.

We had not been there very long before we discovered a fine watermelon patch some three or four miles down the river. A few of us arranged one night to go out and sample them. The patch was situated right at the head of a ravine in the center of a corn field. The corn was well ripened and as high as a horse's back, and around the head of this ravine, where the watermelon patch was situated, there was a fine plot of green grass where a cow and her young calf had been picketed by a long rope. The field was enclosed with an old-fashioned rail fence. The owner of this property was a penurious and grasping old bachelor, one who would feel the loss of a watermelon more than some people would a hundred dollars, and the boys hearing this, naturally thought his watermelons would taste sweeter than any one else's. One night

some ten or twelve of the boys stole out from camp and made their way along the road until they got opposite this patch. They tied their horses to the fence, about a quarter of a mile distant, and proceeded to the place without delay, not being aware that the cow and calf had been tied there. When they suddenly emerged from the thick corn into the watermelon patch the cow became frightened and gave vent to a bellow that brought the old man from the house with a double-barreled shotgun. Quickly dashing forward, he frightened the cow still more and she tore loose from her moorings and rushed pell-mell straight for the fence where the boys' horses were tied. In the meantime we had slipped off to one side and lain down to await results.

It was not long before we knew them. The old man had followed the rattle of the corn ahead of him, never dreaming for one moment but that it was the boys trying to escape from him, and just as the cow was nearing the fence where the horses had been left, he turned loose, with both barrels of his gun, right down the center of the two rows of corn, filling the cow full of shot. With a bellow and a bound she dashed headlong into the fence where our steeds

were hitched, knocking off several of the rails and causing the horses to break loose. With frightened snorts and flying tails our riderless mounts made for camp, where their arrival created no small sensation, and an hour or two after they were followed by a dozen very crestfallen troopers, who were promptly gathered into the guard-house.

You should have seen the fun the boys had the next day, marking time for two hours bareheaded in the boiling hot sun.

One day after drill, while we boys were lying on the grass resting and pleasantly idling an hour away under the shade trees that skirted that beautiful little stream known as Salt River, an old man was observed slowly approaching.

He had a sweet, kind face, and long, white, curly locks of hair hanging down to his shoulders (showing plainly he had been some fond mother's curly-headed boy).

His form was small and slender and slightly bent from at least seventy years of earthly struggles. He was a study to me as he appealed to different ones to get him some work, "Anything! just to live! just for some place to stay!"

One of our number said, "Join the army, my boy."



Salt River bridge, where Old Uncle made his first appearance in camp.



The old man replied, "They don't want me now; I am too old. The army had my young life." Then he produced a roll of paper bearing out his assertion.

"You never carried a gun," vouchsafed another, "I don't think you were large enough to carry one; besides, you were never in a fight when they fought to kill, and did kill—in other words a battle, a charge. Would you stay in a case like that?"

The old man made no comment until the young fellow had finished, then with his clear blue eyes almost flashing sparks of fire, he answered, "My dear boy, I did not apply for a fighting position. I never said I would fight to kill, or that I ever had, I only stated that I was in the army, as my papers prove. I have done my duty when a soldier under the stars and stripes to the best of my ability, and would defend it to-day if necessary, or if an opportunity offered. I may seem weak, but I would give my strength, my life, if need be, to that grand old banner. Now that I am old I have no home; no one wants me, and I am hungry and tired. Can I rest here awhile, gentlemen?" giving an appealing glance down the line.

For an instant there was no reply. Then someone suggested he had better move on.

Quick as a flash our flag-bearer, Jack Richards, sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "No, never!" (He too had been studying the old man.)

Jack was a quiet unassuming youngster, but he had a big heart, and it was generally understood was possessed of some means outside of that which he earned from Uncle Sam.

He approached the old man and said, "Uncle." (The boys laughed and said, "Jack, found your Uncle, eh?")

"Yes," Jack replied, "He shall be my Uncle while here. Now, Uncle, what is it you wish?"

The old man said, "Some place to stay, to be with somebody, and if in return for that kindness there is anything I can do to prove my appreciation just command me."

Jack took him by the hand, led him to the mess tent and fed him, then to the sutler's tent, fitted him from top to toe with clothing, and gave him blankets, telling him to stop around there.

Our new companion was not very long in camp until we all called him Uncle, and he won the esteem and respect of every one in it. The young man who had been so harsh with him upon his arrival made ample apology for his conduct.

He was always on hand if anyone in camp was sick. You did not have to send for him. He appeared to know just what to do; in fact, he was mother and father both to the officers and boys. Other companies associated with us would send for him, but no one could wean him away from the first friend he had found in camp.

Jack's slightest wish was law to him, and when the flag-bearer was once on the sick list the poor old man would sit by his side by the hour and refused to touch a morsel of food except when Jack could be induced to partake of some.

I never saw such devotion. He won the hearts of all and his unostentatious self-sacrifices made better men of us all.

The old man had but little to say regarding his past. His whole aim and object in life seemed to be to repay Jack for the kindness which had been shown him when he first came among us. Little did he think he would some day be called upon to risk his life at Jack's request, but when the occasion did come he was equal to it, thereby according to him a niche of honor in our life-long memories of the Civil War.

Roberson, the comedian of the company, figured in a horse sale while we were at Salt Lake

bridge, which was somewhat characteristic of the horse sharp and which still further added to our notoriety.

He formed the acquaintance of a banker in Mexico by the name of Ringo, who was generally liked by everybody for his genial, affable and unaffected manner, and who was considered one of the shrewdest men in a horse trade in that locality, being one of several who bought horses and sold them to the Government.

Mr. Ringo, while in conversation with Mr. Roberson, asked him if he knew of anyone who had some horses for sale. Roberson replied that he had a friend down in Pike County who had a couple of very fine horses. Ringo asked him to write to his friend and tell him to bring them up.

In a few days Roberson's friend arrived with a fine pair of sixteen-hand horses, and they presented themselves, together with the horses, at Mr. Ringo's place of business.

Mr. Ringo came out, looked the horses over carefully, and stated that while the span was very fine there was no demand at present for them and he did not care to buy except at a very low figure, which he named. Roberson and his friend were chagrined at this unexpected tack of

the banker. As his friend needed money and the other buyers being out of town, they decided it was best to take Ringo's offer rather than lead them back fifty or sixty miles and take the chances of having them taken away from them by the enemy. When the horses were turned over to Ringo, Roberson noticed Ringo chuckling to himself at his clever ruse in the deal and he made up his mind to play even if an opportunity ever offered.

One day, a few weeks after this, an old fellow drove into camp with some forage. He had a splendid-looking pair of sorrels before his wagon and Roberson noticed that in pulling up the steep river bank they were very badly wind broken—that is, an extra exertion of any kind would cause them to throw their mouths wide open and blow furiously. Roberson approached, and after quickly examining the span said, "Old man, do you want to sell those horses?" "Yep! but they're no account." Roberson replied, "That's the reason I want them."

"Well," the old man responded, "I have one more load of corn to deliver before I can receive my voucher, and if you like you may have those horses for forty dollars a piece." Roberson sealed

the bargain at once by paying him twenty dollars, promising that the balance would be ready when the horses were delivered.

After Roberson received his steeds he procured a couple of what are called halter bridles—a strap passing over the nose, well down toward the nostrils, with a similar strap running underneath the jaw with a buckle on it. After the bit was placed in the horse's mouth this strap under the jaw could be tightened up so that it would be impossible for the horse to open his mouth and display his poor qualities as to good wind, which was one of the principal qualifications requisite for a horse to pass Government inspection.

These horses made a very fine appearance. They were about eight years old and had no discernible blemishes. Roberson sent for his friend to come up at once; then one afternoon he took the two sorrels, put on the halter bridles and rode leisurely past Ringo's place.

Ringo was seated upon his porch, enjoying his after-lunch cigar. The high-stepping sorrels at once attracted his attention. They were a pair of thoroughbreds; there could be no mistake about that. If he could only secure them at a reasonable figure. It was an opportunity not to be lost.

He arose and went down to the gate. Roberson rode on slowly, seemingly unconscious of the horse-dealer's presence.

"Hello!" Ringo called. "Roberson, do you want to sell those horses?" "Not to you," he replied. Just at this opportune moment another buyer approached Roberson on horseback and they held a long consultation. (This meeting of Roberson and the buyer at that particular time and place was well understood between them.) When Ringo's supposed opponent in this particular deal had ridden away, he requested Roberson to ride his horses up to the gate. Ringo looked them over.

"Trot them down the road," he requested.

"What for?" Roberson asked. "To see if their wind is all right," Ringo responded.

"What difference does that make to you? I wouldn't sell them to you, anyway; besides, I wouldn't trot barefooted horses over the rough cobbles on this street."

At that Roberson rode away. As he did so Ringo called out if he would come back and tie those two animals up and take off their saddles, he would give him two hundred and fifty dollars. The profitable deal in which he had

figured with these two men was still fresh in his mind, as it was also in Roberson's and his friend's. They rode back, turned over the horses and received the two hundred and fifty dollars. The horses were sent to the corral, where there were two or three carloads of horses in waiting to be shipped to St. Louis the next day. This little trick leaked out among all the dealers opposed to Ringo in the horse market, and all were watching and waiting in readiness to take the train to St. Louis, as soon as the shipment was made, to see the fun at the inspection.

As a number of boys in camp had gotten wind of this amusing incident they secured furloughs and went along with Roberson and the other horsemen, unknown to Ringo.

The inspection consisted of running the horses from a quarter to half a mile under full speed, then returning and jumping poles two feet high from the ground, to test their wind and limbs.

We arrived on the spot in due time. Crowds were lined up on either side of the testing-track to watch the performance.

Up to this time Mr. Ringo had the credit of selling the Government some of the finest cavalry and artillery horses that ever led a charge. He

was proud of this distinction, and was always on hand to witness the performance of his steeds. So often had he been there and gone through this that he became a familiar figure to the frequenters of the testing-track. This day quite a number of his horses were brought out, and I must say their performances were creditable to the buyer.

We were watching, with no small amount of anxiety, to see the two sorrels make their appearance.

We were sure they would bring them together, for they were high-headed and made a splendid appearance when standing still. Finally they dashed from the stables, under whip and spur, with their mouths wide open, blowing like two sea-lions; the shouts that went up from the crowd frightened the animals and they became unmanageable. The inspectors signaled and called for the riders to return, but they were powerless to do so; the horses continued to plunge and blow, and the thousands of people along the line were convulsed with laughter.

Ringo was dumbfounded, sending his men in all directions to see if there was anyone present from Mexico to witness his defeat. It was not

long, however, before he discovered where the boys were stopping who had played even with him on the former horse deal. He had their hotel bill arranged for, without their knowledge, and on our return from Mexico, Roberson and a few of his friends who were with him in St. Louis were invited to Mr. Ringo's home and banqueted in an up-to-date style. He said he had more fun out of that horse deal than anything that had occurred in all his life.

We drilled for a time at Salt River, and I became restless and longed for adventure. My thoughts wandered back to an old friend of mine by the name of Foster, with whom I had roomed for a year or two before the war.

He had at one time been a star actor and an athlete as well. Having given up the histrionic profession he came to our town to live on account of his health. He had a trunkful of stage paraphernalia, and we frequently had amateur plays. He fixed me up for the occasion and I generally made a hit when he did so.

My last appearance was in "Widow Bedott," a benefit given for the Sunday-school in the little town where I lived. The village belle, Miss Anna Bay, appeared as the Widow Bedott, and I took the part of Elder Sniffles.

Miss Bay was very retiring in her manners, and had never been known to participate in anything of the kind before, but as she was one of the leaders in the Sunday-school she had to do her part, although it required a great amount of persuasion to obtain her consent.

The night the benefit came off the hall was crowded to the door. Miss Bay was fair of face and form, with a pretty little foot to match, and she knew it. As I was sitting under the tree listening to her part there was a house broom standing near, and in moving it a large straw happened to fall. As I glanced at the pretty slipper showing off her foot and ankle to such an advantage, I picked up that straw and stuck it through the stocking just above the slipper. She felt the sting of the straw, sprang forward, grabbed the broom, and with the flat part struck me on the top of my plug hat and drove it down over my eyes, breaking my glasses and at the same time nearly stunning me; she then ran off the stage. Being unable to remove the hat, I was blind, so to speak. Up to this time the play was dry to me and the audience did not seem to appreciate my position, but when that hat came down over my ears the house rang with laughter

and cheers. They had seen my little maneuver and it met with overwhelming applause.

I got up and remained standing, wondering what in the world to do. The prompter behind the scenes, not knowing what had happened when there was a lull, spoke so loudly that nearly all the audience could hear him admonishing me thus :

"Bow your acknowledgments; bow your acknowledgments!" The audience went wild, so I bowed again and again, not knowing my back was turned to the house.

The prompter discovered my position and took me off the stage. Then and there the young lady's sweetheart, Andy Wilson, challenged me to a fist-fight for what I had done.

I thought of my friend Foster's gloves, and wondered if he would train me.

So I told the infuriated youth I would lick him to a finish in twenty-one days from that time. I pleaded I was sick and was not well then, and it would be no credit to him to lick a sick boy. He assented to the twenty-one days.

This occurred behind the curtain, but the show stopped then and there.

I went to my room, told my friend what had happened, and asked him what I should do.

"Give him a surprise party," he said. I asked him what he meant by that, so he said he would fix up an old pair of gloves he had, and train me to make a punching-bag of him. "Give him the gloves to put on the day of the fight, but don't tell him you have been training," was Foster's advice.

We met, but called it off. Nevertheless, that training assisted me in carrying out a most daring scheme as a spy. Afterward we joined the same military company and became good friends again. Miss Anna Bay, his sweetheart, forgave me for that little trick I played upon her on the night of the amateur show. She often wrote to the boy she loved, and we all looked forward to the day when her letter would arrive, and we would huddle together to hear the home news dished up in a most entertaining way. Her letters were full of interest, as well as ready wit and humor, and she never forgot to give his comrades words of good cheer.

While lying around the camp I got to thinking about my old friend Foster, and wishing he was in the land of the living. Poor fellow, he died just before the war broke out. He left me a box of his wigs and facial fixings, and had taught me how to make up until I was fairly good at it.

So I wrote to a friend of mine, telling him where I had left this box and asking him to ship it to me at Mexico. In due time the box arrived; I became restless.

Now and then some of the companies from the regiment would go out in the direction of the Missouri River and have a brush with the enemy, but almost invariably without satisfactory results, as the wily foe generally disappeared before we had an opportunity to strike.

My father was first lieutenant in another regiment and I was allowed to visit him occasionally. One day, just after he had returned from a reconnoitering trip, I went with him to Colonel Grant's tent.

The colonel said to him, "If it was only possible to get some one familiar with the country and not known by the people to go in there, find out their haunts and customs, and how they manage to disperse so quickly and get together apparently as readily, it would be of great advantage to us." I spoke up and said, "I know the country and some of the people, and I can do it."

The colonel smiled and my father looked very much annoyed because I had spoken. I said no more to them, but I made up my mind that I

would disguise myself and go; but I must confide in some one. I thought of Dobbins, the mail agent on the North Missouri (now the Wabash), and waited that night until his train came down. I jumped on his car and said, "Dave, write my father, just as soon as you get in, that I am in St. Louis, came down with you, in order to reach him by to-morrow night." Then I told Dave briefly my plans.

I flew to camp, took all my belongings, and went up town that night and got a room in a lodging-house. Then I went to a second-hand clothing store and bought a pair of pants which did not reach the tops of my shoes by four inches, and in which there were numerous patches; an old pair of brogan shoes, both for the same foot; a vest, short and ragged; a jacket coat which was altogether too large; and a dirty looking white slouch hat, with a hole in the middle, completed my outfit.

Then going back to my rooms, I donned the clothes, hid my uniform in an old attic, fixed my facial expression, and put on a well-fitting wig with long, dirty looking hair. When I put on that hat, with a lock pulled through the hole in the crown, I really looked an object of pity.

In order to get into the enemy's lines and make a success of my undertaking I knew I must devise some way to obtain access to the guardhouse with the suspects they had confined there. I felt sure I could accomplish it if my identity was not discovered before I got in, for they were arresting everybody who looked the least bit suspicious. The suspects were given their liberty if there was nothing found against them, and my hopes were that I was to be arrested and then turned loose with some of the Rebel prisoners.

I secured an old abandoned mare from the commons, a rope bridle, and a saddle to match. This animal had been handsome in her younger days, but that era of her life had long since departed. Taking some small memorandum books and pencil which I secreted in my shoes, I presented myself at the colonel's tent about dusk.

One of the staff officers came out and said, "Well, my boy, what do you want?"

"I want work, sir."

"What kind of work?"

"Well, 'most anything; I'd like to be a soldier."

"What! you a soldier?"



The boy spy.



In a moment a suspicious look came into his eyes, and he proceeded to question me still further.

"What's your name?"

I answered, "Sammy Smith."

With a shrug of his shoulders, "Very uncommon name. Where do you live?"

"Everywhere."

He walked up close to me, and looking me square in the face until my heart almost failed me, said, "Say, my boy, where have you been the last two or three months?"

The question nearly paralyzed me, but I thought a moment. I must be equal to the occasion, or the boys would guy me into the next world. I replied, "I have been sick for a long time."

"Where?" he quickly asked.

"In the county hospital, sir."

"What county?"

"I don't know, sir, and I ain't very well just now, sir."

Quicker than a flash he replied, "If you are as sick as you look, your funeral is over. Say, my boy, where is your father?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Your mother?"

"Don't know, sir; guess I ain't got any."

He looked me all over for a few minutes, pulled the old mare's tail, felt the bundle of rags tied on the back of the saddle, and I expected every moment he would look through my clothing, especially as I was in a manner round-shouldered from the wigs and things I had stored away under my coat on my back to disguise myself with when occasion required.

But he didn't. Instead, he hustled me off to the guardhouse and the old mare to the corral.

I was placed with other prisoners, and they, too, looked upon me with suspicion, imagining, no doubt, that I was placed in there to hear what they had to say. Now I knew I was in for it, and had to make the best of it. I must work myself into the good graces of the prisoners.

After I had been under guard for awhile I began to debate in my mind whether that cuss knew me or just wanted to see if I had the pluck, sense and good judgment to carry out such a dangerous and valuable project, or didn't he really know me and merely suspected that I was a spy for the Rebels?

Well, I thought, there is but one thing to do and that is to play it out to the best of my ability. My father had received a letter from Mr.

Dobbins stating that I had gone to St. Louis, and this becoming known in camp satisfactorily explained my absence. Hearing this talked over by the guards outside where I was imprisoned, I resolved not to let the slightest opportunity pass which would enable me to accomplish my object.

After being in the guardhouse all night and the next day life became monotonous, and the prisoners, some six in number, did not seem to take kindly to me until after the second night, when one of the prisoners, well advanced in years and rather frail, was taken sick. I was fairly good at nursing and went to work and heated bricks and placed them around his limbs to keep him warm.

It was a dark night and the only light we had was that from the fireplace in the loghouse where we were imprisoned.

About twelve o'clock I heard a clink of dishes at the door outside, where the guard was, so I peeped through a crack and saw that he had ordered from a near-by restaurant a most appetizing little repast. I knew from the aroma that it was accompanied by some real coffee, not army mess beverage. As it was within easy reach of the door, and the guard could only take a sip

now and then (he was not allowed to stop on his beat) as he walked to and fro, I concluded that I would just take that lunch to the old man when the sentry got to the further end of his beat.

I called to the old man's son, "Cover over the coals in the fireplace with ashes and dirt so that the guard cannot see in." The fire was darkened at once. I opened the door just the least bit, poured the coffee into one of the tin cups, took what chicken and other goodies I could get, and placing them in a towel, put it under the old man's blanket so that he could eat it without being detected.

The old man had taken but a little when he said to me, "God bless you honey, my poor little unfortunate boy, you have helped me." In an instant his son turned to me and extending his hand, gave me a hearty shake.

By this time the guard outside had missed his lunch and he was expressing, in loud tones, his opinion of anyone who would do such a thing.

As I knew that he could not recognize my voice I proceeded to have some fun at his expense, so I said, "Keep still out there; we can't sleep."

He replied, "Some one has stolen my supper and if I knew who it was who did it I'd put a bayonet through him."

I told him to come in and try it for I had stolen it.

He thought I was only teasing him, and I was just as well pleased that he took it that way; but my bluff worked, for he said he knew who did it, the same chap had done it once before.

My prison comrades felt relieved, for they were sure I would be caught and punished; but I told them I did not care, for the officer who ordered me under arrest said I would not live very long anyway. This little episode placed me in good favor with the prisoners and they began to look upon me as the real thing, and as one who could and would do a good turn for them.

After a couple of days they took five of us out, gave us our horses and then, escorted by six mounted men, all strangers to me, we were sent outside the picket lines some five miles distant.

One of the escort got very fresh with me and annoyed me greatly by pulling my hair, as he supposed (I was afraid he would pull my wig off and expose the whole thing). He was about my

size, but owing to my dress I looked much smaller than he.

Finally, I got so exasperated I told him if he was not armed I would give him a good punching. In an instant he proposed to disarm and fight.

The others of the guard were older men, and I knew they would see fair play. After they had promised to keep his gun till we were out of reach I consented to fight him.

The soldiers were all eager for the fun. The prisoners did not relish the proposition, for they feared it might end in harm to me.

I knew that all I had to do in case the worst came was to show them who I was and they would not dare to do or say anything.

So we dismounted and stationed ourselves some ten feet apart. He, as I expected, made a wild rush, and when near me I dropped on my knees with my head close to the ground and butted him on the legs; he fell headlong over me, bringing his face in contact with the ground and stunning him. When he arose and faced me I quickly placed one foot under his guard against his chest and with a half push and a kick sent him sprawling again on the ground.

By this time all the on-lookers were convulsed with laughter, and as he struck the ground the second time I turned a somersault, caught the horn of my saddle, sprang upon the old mare and we started up the road.

The spectators were bursting their sides with laughter at my opponent's defeat, and as he did not care to be humiliated any more before them for their amusement he did not offer to renew the combat.

The escort came near taking me back to camp as they felt sure I had been liberated by mistake, but I told them they would be disobeying orders to do that, so they let me go.

After we were released by the squad of soldiers and told to move on we could hear them for some distance laughing at their young comrade's misfortune and saying, "No one can tell by the looks of a toad how far it can jump."

We rode on some little distance in silence. At last, the one who had had the least to say to me and who evidently entertained some suspicions of me broke the monotony by calling a halt under some shade trees, and facing me squarely and looking at me more carefully than before said, "My boy, you are not what you pretend to be,

and you can go no further until I know more of you."

His keen piercing eyes told me that he meant it, and his actions clearly proved that he was a man of importance in the enemy's ranks.

For an instant the fear that he had penetrated my disguise staggered me, but I thought a moment and then asked, "What do you want to know about me? I can only tell you what I know about myself and I will gladly answer any and all the questions you ask."

"Well, where do you live?"

"Anywhere," I replied.

"Who can you refer me to?"

"No one."

"What have you been doing for a living?"

"Oh! I have been with a circus ever since I was a little boy," I answered.

That appeared to allay his suspicions for the time being, for he said, "We'll take you along and test your ability to convince us that you were a circus boy. I almost believe that you have at some time belonged to a circus since I saw you lick that young Yankee."

So we proceeded on our journey. I noticed that the sergeant's dog had followed us instead

of returning with the soldiers, so I got off my horse and took part of my rope bridle and tied it around his neck. My inquisitor noticed this in a moment and asked me what I was going to do with the dog. I told him, as he wanted me to show my ability as a circus boy, I intended to take the dog along to teach him some tricks.

We rode along until dark, when at a certain point the company separated, my questioner beckoning me to follow him. We went through the woods, and every now and then he would stop and examine the trees. I noticed there were little knots tied to the limbs of the young trees, and these he would carefully scrutinize. The marks were just high enough to be easily seen by one on horseback, indicating clearly that they were intended as signs to guide those who understood them to some camp or rendezvous; this afterward proved to be the case. This was the secret of the rapid movement of the enemy. It demonstrated how, when attacked, they would scatter with no understanding to the place of concentration; but the knots in those limbs, when understood, told their own story.

We arrived at their place of rendezvous early the next morning and I was placed under guard.

It soon got noised about that I was an acrobat or circus boy of some kind, and they were anxious to see me perform.

I told them as my dog would need training to make the show interesting they must give me more freedom in some secluded place where I could put my canine assistant through his paces, and that when he had been sufficiently instructed I would entertain them to a finish, but that two or three days' time would be required to accomplish this. The officers readily consented, for it had become monotonous for the soldiers and they were eager for fun.

So they put me and the dog in an old out-building, with permission to select any of the boys to help me in the performance if I wished. And I went to work in earnest.

In obtaining information as to the size of the camp, the preparations made for its defense, topography of the country surrounding it, and other data, such as I desired, I was compelled to use the utmost caution. A false step would have been fatal; after many narrow escapes from detection I thought I had sufficient information.

"Three thousand men, partly armed; plenty of grit; not much food and little ammunition; no



The dog that carried the despatch.



regularity of arms; eight pieces of artillery made from six-inch gas pipe from Mexico, banded with wrought iron bands, all loaded and mounted on two farm wagon wheels, and will blow up when fired; breast-works across a wide flat canyon made from dirt and trees, no underbrush in front. Follow knots, freshly knotted, tied about twigs in small limbs; leave road at a tall black snag; noontime best time to attack; they are more off their guard then than at night or morning.

“DOBBINS.”

I returned to my quarters, wrote the facts I had collected in a little note-book and tied it securely around the dog's neck. I thought a moment after tying it on, and I said to myself, “No, I'll not send it. I'll never be the one to bring our own flesh and blood in battle. They are our very own, as brave and good as we are and where have I met kinder and better men.”

Then the other side of the argument presented itself to my mind, “Knowing the Southern people as I do, should they find out who I really was and that I had turned traitor to my own flag by not sending the message I had vowed to send, they would loathe and despise me.”

My duty in the matter appeared perfectly clear, so after dark I took the dog and crept to the outskirts of the camp, and after patting and talking to him in the way dogs love, I told him to go. The faithful animal seemed to comprehend what was required of him and instantly disappeared in the woods. Would he have sense enough to find his master, the sergeant, or would he come back to the camp seeking me and bearing the message which, if intercepted, would mean my death? Rest assured I passed an anxious night.

Owing to the change of guards the absence of my dog was not noticed by them, but I was watched very closely.

The third day a lot of girls came to see me, and they poked all sorts of fun at me. One ventured to ask me if I was a Yankee. I said, "Yes." She said, "I thought Yankees had horns." I replied, "As a rule they have, but I am a Muley."

The next night would be the night of the fourth day, and I promised the show would come off then. Therefore, by eleven o'clock I was turning handsprings and dancing to amuse them, as they thought, but I had to keep up my courage, for I felt satisfied that the dog had landed



Violin that was captured where Old Uncle made his
last charge.

my note. My father would recognize my handwriting, would understand the situation, and the attack was liable to be made now, I thought, at any moment.

I kept on dancing and now and then, for a change, playing some sweet old melodies on an old violin they had given me, my heart in my throat, as it were. But I continued to keep up my spirits, for I knew did I falter for one moment and show my feelings or betray my anxiety watching for the boys, or allow my nerves to give way, my doom was sealed. But I must have amused them, for the officer said, "My boy, when did you ever have so much fun before?" I replied, "When I had the measles."

One of them said, "Well, is your performance about ready to come off?" I replied, "Not later than this evening." Then noticing the absence of my dog he asked where it was. I replied, "That dog is a wonder; I have sent him on a little run and when he returns the performance will commence without delay."

I had hardly finished that sentence when, sure enough, as I had anticipated (it being about 12:30) I heard shots from the Rebel pickets and saw men running from every direction toward

the fortification, and all who had been watching me, including the guard, fled and left me alone.

At that instant I saw our men dash from the woods directly in front of the breastworks, some thousand yards distant from where I was. I at once discovered them to be four companies of cavalry that had been at Salt River bridge for a long time, my company being one of the number.

The house in which I was quartered was almost midway between the two opposing forces, just off to one side, so that I could look down the line and plainly see all that was going on, as it was open ground in front of the parapet.

As soon as they emerged from the woods the force swung into line without a moment's delay. The company I belonged to was on the right and nearest to me. The first man I recognized in the ranks was our old Uncle, on a black charger, the finest horse in the regiment, side by side with Jack, the flag-bearer.

Even at the distance which separated us I could hear the shouts by the major in command, "Dismount! Advance! Steady! Steady, men!" It was no place for a cavalry charge, and the men advanced some fifty feet ahead of their horses and then halted, evidently thinking themselves well

out of rifle range of the enemy and apparently awaiting reinforcements, when suddenly from the protected position which the enemy held came a thousands puffs of smoke and fire and the deafening crash of rifle volley.

Our ranks swayed; men fell dead and wounded. I sprang from my place of cover to do what I could for those dear to me.

What I witnessed there in a few brief moments seemed days and years of anxiety, and what I saw I can only give a feeble description of in comparison to its reality.

Jack Richards, our flag-bearer, fell mortally wounded. Old Uncle, hatless, with his long white curly locks receding now and then from his slender neck and shoulders, as the gentle breezes kissed them, sprang forward like a maddened tigress protecting her young, to Jack's side. Jack raised his head and said, "Uncle, take my flag and plant it on those breastworks."

With the fire of youth in his eyes the old man grabbed the flagstaff and dashed forward. As he did so he cried, "Charge them, boys! Charge them! The lines swayed forward. The officers along the line sang out, "Steady men! Steady!" Not a shot had as yet been fired from our lines.

All this time old Uncle was rushing forward, under the bright noonday sun, toward the breastworks in front, alone, in plain view of all, every man watching him with bated breath, when suddenly he was seen to fall to his knees again and again and then struggle to his feet with the blood streaming over his long white hair; and as he arose for the fourth time he made another appeal to the boys for a charge.

Words are inadequate to describe what happened when they saw one so dear to them all covered with blood, pleading for a charge in language and tones that went straight to the heart.

A simultaneous shout went up from the officers and men, "Charge! and hold your fire!" A dash—a cheer! and a rush of maddened men that made the earth tremble. No power on earth could have held them back. Onward they went, dashing over the breastworks and pouring in a deadly fire.

At the same instant the old man reached the top of the breastworks, planted his flag, and fell riddled with the enemy's bullets.

The enemy fell back badly defeated. When the battle was over strong men knelt beside the old man's body and wept.



The battle where Uncle made his last charge.

The news that a battle was on and our company was engaged in it spread rapidly by wire and messenger and soon reached our own little town, some twenty-five miles distant.

There was a flag of truce to allow both sides to bury their dead. I turned my attention to a boy who lay wounded—a boy who had for a sweetheart the loveliest and bravest girl I ever knew—a girl who held us in check by kind, sweet words dropped from the point of her magnetic pen.

While I was in a stooping posture over our poor wounded comrade I heard the clatter of hoofs, and looking up I saw a horse, white with foam, under full speed, coming straight toward us, and a slender girl, unattended, his rider. I instantly recognized her as the sweetheart of my comrade, Andy Wilson. She rendered us much valuable assistance with the wounded, and the next day she was furnished an escort to bear her wounded charge to her home at the military post, where she could nurse him back to health.

The remainder of our force took up the trail of the enemy, and we tracked them by day and by night when the blanket of darkness was pinned up by the stars lighting Old Glory's pathway through the mountain forest.

On the afternoon of July 28, 1862, we fell in with Lieut.-Colonel Odon Guitar, near Moore's Mill, in command of 120 men, 10th Regiment Missouri Militia Cavalry, and 306 men, Merrill's Horse, and some of the 9th Missouri Cavalry and 133 men of the 3d Iowa Cavalry, under Major Cadwell; also a detachment of 38 men from an Independent Company of Red Rovers under Captain Rice, and one section of the 3d Indiana Battery with two six-pound guns and 32 men, commanded by Lieutenant A. G. Armington.

We were informed by Lieut.-Colonel Odon Guitar that there would be something doing very soon, and to fall in line. We had scarcely gotten into position when a terrific fire was poured into our lines from the brush. Our men immediately dismounted and returned the fire. The fierce firing from the Rebel ranks swayed our lines, men falling dead and wounded on all sides, and one could see from the expression on the faces of the officers and men that they had the gravest fears of the final result. Our guns were quickly brought forward and unlimbered, as the brush was too thick for a cavalry charge or to permit the handling of artillery with animals. Our guns belched forth canister into the Rebel lines, checking their

fire for an instant. Then we plainly heard orders given by the Rebel commander to charge our guns and take them or die. Onward they came, pouring volley after volley into our ranks, at the same time sending forth a Rebel yell that under ordinary circumstances would make the stoutest heart quail. One of my comrades at my side asked me at the time how many Rebels I thought there were. I replied, "A million," and I spoke as I felt.

To this charge, however, we shouted defiance and returned volley after volley from our rifles, our two guns decimating the ranks of the enemy with grape and canister. Onward they came with maddened frenzy. We drove them back, killing fifty or sixty and wounding one hundred and fifty, but not, however, until they had killed and wounded a number of our gunners and many of the men aiding them. At this juncture one of the gunners fell, mortally wounded. A comrade stooped to raise him in his arms, when he shouted, "Stand by your gun my brave boy! Save it or die, for here they come again. Give them a double charge, my boys!" No quicker said than his order was promptly obeyed. The old man, raising himself to his knees, snatched

one of our flags from the ground that had been trampled and torn in the former charge, and waving it in the air, cheered the boys at the guns. Men sprang forward from the ranks to fill the places of those killed and wounded and to help pull the guns through the woods.

The enemy was right upon us by this time and the wounded gunner's action caused a cheer around the guns which went down the line like a high wind wafting fire through a dry grain field. Then the old gunner begged to be carried to his gun, and Lieutenant A. G. Armington, who was in charge of the battery and who had noticed his daring and the work he had done, gave an order and he was raised by four stalwart men on an improvised blanket litter and carried forward. "Give them a double charge!" the old gunner again called, as they raised him up. A simultaneous shout went up from the officers and men to charge, and the whole line dashed forward like a shot from a gun and bore down on the enemy in maddened fury. The gun that the wounded man had charge of was pulled through the woods by hand at such a rapid pace that the other piece was distanced in the dash. The dying gunner was carried forward on his litter, his life-blood

oozing through the blanket on which he was carried. At every step he urged his comrades forward; he made them fighting demons. They were stripped to the waist and bareheaded and bent to their duty with the strength of giants, and a cheer went up that rent the air above the cannon's roar for this gallant little Indiana Battery. The contagious cheer went down the line like an electric current and we drove the enemy, thrice our number, back like chaff before the wind. The officers were even more daring than the men and would have led their troops through Hell.

On reaching the brow of the hill we discovered that a portion of the enemy had made a stand in an old tobacco barn. "Give them a solid shot," the old gunner again cried out; but the shot fell short. It was then the old hero breathed his last, and while a few brave men stood with bowed heads over the lifeless form of the brave old gunner, Pat Connolly (I do not remember the company to which he belonged, but I think it was the Red Rover), who had had some practice with artillery, sprang forward and elevating the muzzle of the six-pounder, sent a solid ball through the top of the building, tearing away portions of the

partly decayed roof timbers and shakes of the barn and throwing them down on the heads of the enemy, putting them to flight. As he saw the effect of his shot he yelled, "Hurrah for old Ireland!" This was another signal for a cheer and a dash; the officers ordered another charge and the boys rushed down the valley after them in hot pursuit, firing charge upon charge after the fleeing enemy.

When the sun kissed the sky above us good-day and settled down in the western horizon, and night came on and began to shed her tears on the beautiful foliage of the forest, our bugle called us back to care for our dead and wounded.

The next morning, while the sun was drying up the tears night had shed on the dimpled cheeks of the wild rosebud, the fallen heroes, both the blue and the gray, were laid to rest near the spot where they made their last gallant charge. Then we fell into line and turned our faces toward our post quarters with a heavy heart, carrying our wounded with us.

We took part in other skirmishes and battles but none that presents the pathos of those I have described; therefore I will pass to the close of the historic struggle. When those whom Divine

Providence had saved gathered around their fire-sides with their loved ones their thoughts often reverted to those who had been buried on the field of battle.

We had many reunions of those near-by, one of which I will long remember. It was on Christmas Eve of 1865, when the laughing full moon shone brightly down on the snow-covered earth and sleighs slipped over the white-crueted ground, driven by horses prancing to the merry jingle of the bells which encircled their necks, and pulled up in a swift trot in front of a substantial, old-fashioned farmhouse nestled among a little grove of native walnut and oak trees, where we had all been requested to be present without fail and told we would be informed on our arrival the object of this reunion. Our company, however, was pretty well scattered by this time, some of them living many miles away, but none of the officers we held most dear were within reach that we knew of.

Myself and a few others being late and fearing that we would miss some of the fun that might be going on, as our gatherings were always very jolly, we sprang from our sleighs and rushed into the house. To our surprise the first to grasp our

hands was our dear old brave captain, and the next was Roberson, the cuss who gave us so much notoriety over the horse deal he figured in in Mexico. His hearty handshake carried me back to other evenings around our camp-fire where he often entertained us with his ready wit and songs. This pleasant surprise suggested to us at once the reason we were requested to come, but it transpired a little later in the evening that there was another and still greater surprise in store for us. The secret had been zealously guarded until the final moment, when Andy Wilson, our wounded comrade, and the dear, brave girl who took a wild ride of twenty-five miles on horseback to the battle-field where old Uncle made his last gallant charge, stepped to the center of the room and were joined in holy wedlock by our army chaplain. The bride looked as sweet and womanly as she did the day we saw her on the battle-field caring for the wounded, and we all stood with bowed heads in silent prayer for the future of those two young people whom we all loved and honored.

THE STORY OF A BLOOD-STAINED POEM

In the year 1899, in the city of San Francisco, when a number of our Eastern regiments of Volunteers returned from Manila, everybody was on the qui vive to welcome them because they were just as dear to us as our California men who went to the Philippines.

The arrival of a transport loaded with troops was always heralded by the tooting of whistles and firing of guns. By the time the vessel had reached the dock the entire city had turned out en masse to honor the returning heroes. The soldiers marched through the streets with pale and haggard faces, followed by their ambulances loaded with the sick and wounded, their flag-bearer holding on high the stars and stripes, tattered and torn by coming in contact with the shot and shell from the enemy's lines.

Many a pathetic scene was witnessed on that line of march through the city to the Presidio grounds, where they were to be encamped.

Mothers, sisters and sweethearts who had come from the East to meet those dear to them waited patiently on the sidewalks, watching for some familiar face as the troops marched by, and now and then one could see someone dart from the sidewalk into the ranks and be clasped in the arms of some marching soldier, as tender and gallant as he was brave and daring in the battles in which he had fought, and the women marched proudly side by side with their heroes. Some, however, watched in vain and turned away with a sigh as the last trooper had passed them by. Some loved ones had been brought back on the same steamer cold in death, others laid to rest on the field of battle.

I frequently went out to the Presidio to see the men and hear them talk of the Filipinos. Many of the soldiers had boxes which they had brought from Manila, filled with trinkets and war mementoes of all kinds. Some gave them away to friends. One day I came across a poor fellow who said he had no friends to give his trinkets to, and as he was sick and in need of money he would like to sell his box.





I did not look through it, but asked what he would take for it. He named the price; I handed him the money and went away with the little box under my arm.

I doubt if he knew the contents; I am sure I did not. I never asked his name, and if I knew his regiment or company I have forgotten it.

I was called away from the city the next morning and did not return for several weeks, and my recent purchase passed completely out of my mind.

Upon my return I decided to change my place of residence, when, in packing and unpacking, I came across this box. I remembered that I had never examined its contents, so I opened it and took out several little trinkets of such small value that I laid them aside. When I reached the bottom of the box, I found a torn, dirty and blood-stained poem, written in pencil, its condition plainly indicating that it had been picked up from some battle-field, tossed into the box and forgotten.

I doubt if the one who had sold the box knew of its existence. It may have been given to him by some poor fellow who was never to see his native land again.

It must have been written under fire, as it had every appearance of being picked up out of the dirt and been trampled upon by no one knows how many feet.

I present you with a facsimile of the original, except that it is reduced in size to conform with the pages of this book.

Were these loving memories of home stained with the blood of some gallant old Northern veteran of the Civil War, or his son; or was it some daring, brave old veteran of the South, or his son? Both marched side by side with Old Glory to Cuba and the Philippines, in answer to our country's call in the war with Spain, carrying everything before them, adding to our nation's wealth in commerce and history, and at the same time showing plainly that the wound of the Civil War was healed over. Will not the people of this great nation remove the scar by seeing that the old white-haired Southern veterans of '61 to '65, who helped to make history then as now, are provided for in old age?

Land Battle in the Philippines

There's a battle been raging Mother,
And the boys are charging, still
Some are dead, and others dying,
In the rice fields, just over the hill.

As I lie on the field of battle.

Wounded by the enemies ball
I dreamt of you dear mother
And thought I heard you call.

I dreamt of dear old Grandma,
And her loving tender ways
Of father, and grand-pa too, And what they
did; For me in my childhood days.

I dreamt of the sweet lay in the meadow,
Where the lark sang their lay in the morn
And the low of the cows in the pasture,
And that dear old home, where I was born

I dreamt of our dear old home,
With its eaves just un-

Where the
That w



A STORY OF THE MINES

A few years ago I got the mining fever. I knew nothing of mining, or did I know the best place to go to become initiated in the business.

One day, while in conversation with one of my business associates by the name of Mr. Garland, he happened to mention incidentally that a friend of his was in a mining camp on the southern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California.

"Why!" I said, "that is just what I have been looking for. I'm thinking about going mining myself. Who is he?"

He said he was a Mr. West, and that if I would like to go into mining he'd write a letter to him and make inquiries for me, as Mr. West was an experienced miner and a jolly good fellow as well.

I was overjoyed at this piece of good news. Mr. Garland wrote to his friend and in four or five days I received a reply from him to come at once; that he had read Mr. Garland's letter to all the boys in town Saturday night, and they would be delighted to have a newcomer in their camp. He would expect me one week from that time. He said, "We will have a rig in waiting at the railroad station to meet the train arriving at three o'clock P. M. to drive you over a pretty rough road, but the thing I shall send will land you in our little camp by the time all the boys get in and I'll introduce you to them. You see, you must be one of them if you are after pointers, as I understand, and we are willing to take a tenderfoot under our wing and have the honor of breaking, yes! b-r-e-a-k-i-n-g you in."

I arrived at the mountain station on time, and darned if the fellow who was to drive me didn't just walk right up and spot me in the crowd.

I walked about one hundred yards to where there were several teams tied, and being a little ahead of my escort I went directly up to a splendid double team of blacks and began to deposit my luggage.

"Hold on," my driver shouted, "that's not my rig," and then, pointing so unsteadily as led me to believe he had indulged in something stronger than pure mountain water, and indicating a dilapidated cart to which was attached a sleepy-looking mule, said, "This is our turn-out." "Why!" I exclaimed, "this looks like an old blind mule that I met in the army in 1862."

"Yes," he replied, "I knew he was an old veteran of some kind." "But," I asked, "can this old mule and cart take us over the rough road Mr. West wrote me about?"

"Well," he drawled, "it will surely get there if it doesn't go over the grade with us or nothing else happens."

So we mounted the cart and started at once, I somewhat doubtfully, it must be confessed, but the driver apparently full of confidence in himself and his antiquated rig.

The road was a typical mountain highway, in many places cut into the solid rock and barely wide enough to admit the passage of the cart, while on the outside the face of the cliffs fell away in sheer precipices of unknown depth. I will not deny that on more than one occasion after we had safely passed such a place I found

my hand convulsively clutching the side of the cart seat, while the perspiration stood in beads on my face. The cheerful driver punctuated the journey with encouraging remarks as to the probabilities of going over the edge and dilated upon the number of accidents which had happened, and how the remains looked when fished out of the depths—that is, those of the victims who were ever found.

But as Mr. West had predicted, the thing he sent took me through all right, and we arrived at the hotel just about dark. It was a pleasant old-fashioned inn, with a sign on the post to direct the weary to a place of rest and refreshment.

The inn was managed by two old people, man and wife, types of the sturdy stock that never lost sight of a business point. The good wife attended to the inn while the husband busied himself in entertaining his guests. Mr. West was standing on the porch and his cordial greeting made me feel at home at once.

He was a large, well-proportioned man, genial and affable, in a good old rough and ready way; his pleasant countenance and a merry twinkle in his eye indicated plainly he was everything my friend Garland said.



Mountain village.



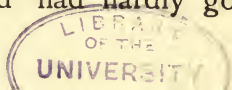
After supper we strolled down a narrow street with business houses on both sides, and at either end of which, dotted here and there, were cabins and cosy little cottages belonging to the miners and their families.

These camps or little towns are very picturesque, generally located near one or two good mines, and are the basis of supplies for miners and prospectors for a radius of from fifteen to twenty miles around. After walking the length of the short street we dropped into a saloon and billiard hall, and there I was introduced to at least thirty or forty miners.

Glancing over the little group I saw they were all sturdy, strong, healthy looking men with good honest faces. I was very favorably impressed by the cordial greeting they gave me, their manners indicating plainly they had more joy in their mountain homes than sorrow.

This billiard hall was a very nice place of its kind and appeared to be their favorite resort.

Mr. West and myself were leaning against the counter of the bar. He had been telling what he thought was a pretty good yarn, and after he had finished I thought it was only proper for me to tell one, so I proceeded and had hardly got



into the story when I noticed a tall, mischievous looking fellow go behind the counter and pour out two large glasses of cold water, one of which he placed in front of me and the other before Mr. West. I picked up my glass and drank the water, for I was thirsty. I noticed Mr. West's countenance change and I asked him what was the matter. He whispered to me that the boys feared we would get dry and talk ourselves to death. As I was not a drinking man I had not set up the drinks, as they called it, so I took the hint and called all hands up. They all drank, took their seats again and requested me to go on with my story.

I had not gone far when I looked around to note the effect of my recital, and I saw they were all sitting cross-legged and working their feet up and down. Not knowing exactly what to think of these strange actions I paused and asked, "What on earth is the matter?"

They replied, "Oh, nothing; go on, it's only a habit we have." So I went on telling my yarn, thinking they were interested, and I soon caught them again at the same thing.

At this juncture my friend West, who had excused himself a few minutes previously, came

in and I whispered to him, "Say, West, are all those fellows string-halt that makes them lift their legs up and down?" "No," he replied.

"Then, what in the name of Heaven is the matter?" West cast his eyes over the foot-swinging crowd, cleared his throat and said, "My dear boy, that story was told here in 1849, and they get so dry listening to those old yarns all these years that they have to do that to make their blood circulate."

I set them up again and charged eight dollars and a half to expenses.

The next day was Sunday and the sun poured its bright rays on the vine-covered porch of the hotel. The landlord, a drummer and myself were seated engaged in casual conversation. I had already been informed that the landlord could and would tell yarns, whenever he could get anybody to listen, which were so vivid that you could almost imagine bears or snakes were near you. On this occasion it was a snake yarn.

He told the drummer that snakes always went in pairs and when he first came there (not stating how many years ago) he actually killed a snake on that very spot eighteen inches in diameter and thirty-six feet long, and he had been looking for

its mate ever since. The drummer moved his chair uneasily and looked around. He was very nervous, it evidently being his first trip to the mountains. His movements showed plainly that he wanted to get away; but the old man told him to hold on, that he had only one more story to tell.

I will confess I was somewhat shaky, because a snake of such immense proportions—eighteen inches in diameter and thirty-six feet long was a pretty good-sized snake, Eh?

I thought I'd go down to the saloon where all the men were and find out if any of them had heard about old Young's snake yarn. If not I'd tell it. They all claimed not to have heard it so I proceeded with the narration. My back was turned toward the door. I said, "Boys, did you know that Mr. Young had killed a snake right where his house stands, thirty-six inches in diameter and seventy-two feet long, and expects its mate at any time?" In a moment I was seized from behind. I jumped, faced about, and there stood Mr. Young. He said, "Here, you, you tell an untruth." I said, "Beg pardon, Mr. Young, what about?" "I listened to you just now lying about me and I won't stand it. The snake, I

said, was eighteen inches in diameter and thirty-six feet long, and you lied about it when you doubled it. You know the one I killed was fairly good size, any way."

When he finished I said, "Mr. Young, I offer you an apology for the offense, and will try in future to quote more accurately in case I think it safe to do so."

During the next two or three days I visited some of the mines near-by, and was particularly interested in a drift mine just about half a mile east of the town, where my friend, Mr. West, was superintendent.

A drift mine is a tunnel run into a hill where there have been ancient channels. The gravel beds in these channels are from ten to four hundred feet wide, and the depth of gravel varies from six inches to twenty feet. Some channels contain what is called free gravel, from the fact that it is not cemented and the gold is easily separated from it.

Gravel that is cemented is usually crushed in a stamp mill using from thirty to forty mesh screen.

The hydraulic mining is very interesting, and in this one claim I examined they had immense giants throwing streams of water with terrific

force two or three hundred feet against the gravel bank, washing it into the bed-rock sluices.

As I walked over some four or five acres of bed-rock that had been washed off I saw about forty or fifty men with picks and shovels picking up the soft bed-rock and shoveling it into little sluices running here and there. In this rock large quantities of coarse gold were found every day, which the men would lay in little piles here and there on flat rock; and I have seen many rough slugs one inch thick and two to eight inches long, and the totals from this source alone sometimes amounted to thousands of dollars per day.

Every evening some one would go around with a bucket to gather up the accumulations.

I think it was the fourth day after my arrival in town that I was informed that they were in the habit of having chicken suppers now and then at the hotel or inn, intended for social affairs, each man paying his share for everything except the chickens. As nearly every one there had poultry of their own they would take turns in donating them. One of these suppers was to occur the next evening. Early in the morning Mr. West took me out some distance from the hotel and

showed me a lot that was fenced in, with a large number of chickens in it which he said belonged to him, remarking that as the landlord and his wife had some guests whom he was going to show through his mines that afternoon he would not have time to kill the fowls, so if I did not object it would be conferring a great favor upon him if I would kill them for him and have them ready to cook upon the landlady's return.

They started out about two o'clock P. M. for the mine. I proceeded at once to kill the chickens and when I had finished with twenty-four of the finest fowl I ever saw I took them over to the hotel and piled them up in the kitchen.

Late in the afternoon the party returned from the mine. As by natural right, the landlady's first move was to enter the sacred precincts of the kitchen. Horror of horrors! two dozen of her best Leghorns, cold in death, was the sight which met her astonished gaze. To say there was something doing right then and there would be putting it very mildly.

She sent down town for me to come up at once, and in a fury of indignation wanted to know what I meant by killing her chickens. I tried to explain matters, but my efforts were futile;

she would not listen, but demanded twenty-four dollars without delay. I paid it, charged it up to expenses, and told her to go ahead with her supper and say nothing.

I wrote that evening to my friend Mr. Garland in San Francisco, telling him how he had distinguished himself in that locality at my expense. Then I communed with myself about the unholy things I could do to my good friend Mr. West. I concluded to do nothing just then but to await my opportunity. It came one day about two weeks after.

It was the custom of the miners to congregate in the village on Saturday afternoons for the purpose of laying in a week's supplies, and perhaps also to indulge in a little friendly gossip with the neighbors, and upon this particular day the main business street was, as usual, crowded.

I was standing near the center of the street talking to a couple of ladies when a double team, whose occupants were two dust-covered men, drove rapidly by and drew up before a livery stable. As it passed one of the men shouted, "Hello, Harvey! up to one of your old tricks? Eh!"

The unexpected salutation was somewhat embarrassing, and after a moment I excused myself to the ladies and went over to the livery stable to discover the identity of the individual whose free and easy manners had placed me in a slightly awkward position. Naturally I began wondering what else I had run up against in the way of practical jokes.

As I arrived at the stable door the gentlemen met me; one was a stranger and the other a dear old friend of mine, a Mr. Wheaton. He was a medium-sized man, full of ready wit and humor and one who never lost an opportunity for innocent fun and amusement, a general favorite and a good business man.

I had not seen him for several years. In fact, had lost track of him entirely. Our meeting in this out-of-the-way place was a surprise to both of us. My anger was at once mollified, as he was one of those genial jolly fellows who had to have his fun even at the expense of his friends. I thought to myself I'm going to have a pretty hard time with Mr. Wheaton and Mr. West together; but I made up my mind they would not get me into any rackets and that I'd keep out of their way. Then I began to wonder if

Mr. Wheaton knew this man West and what possible business could have brought him to this mining camp, and that I must manage somehow to even up the old scores upon them both.

As we walked along to the hotel Mr. Wheaton said he would like to have a private room. He remarked that he was glad to meet me there, as he did not know anyone on the divide. (I said to myself, "I'm glad you don't.") When we were comfortably settled in his room he grew confidential and asked me if I was acquainted with Mr. West. I told him I was. Then the cause of his visit came out. "Now, see here," he said, "I'm superintendent of the North Bloomfield Mines and we have struck cement ground. I understand that this man West is superintendent of a mine that has the latest machinery for working cement gravel, and I know if any man can get me in to see that machinery you can. At any rate you may be able to give me pointers; you know how they are about strangers coming around."

I replied, "I know Mr. West; I can give you pointers, but I cannot for obvious reasons introduce you. I had a little trouble a few days after my arrival that I could have averted had I been

as well posted as I am able to post you at the present time." The possibilities of a great scheme, whereby I might pay off my score to both these worthies came over me and I waxed eloquent.

"Now, look here, Wheaton, what I am about to say to you must be strictly confidential. If it gets out here it will ruin me, as I expect to stay, while you'll be off in a few days and it can't affect you in any way, shape or manner.

"In the first place, as you are superintendent of the North Bloomfield Mines, he has probably heard of you in some way and if you become known to him as Mr. Wheaton your name will be 'mud' as far as getting into the mine is concerned. It would be better for you to go over there under the name of Smith or Jones, looking for work; but what will interest you most now, Wheaton, is this:

"Mr. West is one of the best miners in this section, but every month or two he has a little crazy spell. It don't last long. Those who know him well can handle him all right. I struck him in one of these spells when I first came here. There was no one to give me pointers, so I had trouble.

"You go over to the mines about three o'clock in the afternoon. You will be most likely to find him around the mill at that time. If he has a great meerschaum pipe in his mouth, and whenever he takes it out one corner of his mouth tries to go to his ear and his eyes roll around in a manner not very inviting, that's a sure sign that a spell is coming on. You may possibly come in contact with him while in one of these moods, as it is full moon and about time for him to have a spell. But the moment that he shows these symptoms place yourself directly in front of him, close to him, and point your forefinger right straight at him and look him right in the eyes, holding your finger there until his mouth goes back to its normal position. If the corner of his mouth starts up again, or as many times as it does, place your finger right close to his nose and look him straight into the eyes until the spell is broken.

"I have a fine field-glass, and by standing in the telephone room of the drug store I can plainly see everything going on around the mine, and should you get into serious trouble you make for town and I will have someone meet you who can handle him."

"By Jove!" Wheaton remarked to his friend, "that's a pretty risky thing, ain't it?"

His friend replied that managing cases of mild insanity in a quiet way had been successful in many institutions, and as it was a matter of great importance to them to obtain the information which they were seeking he was willing to risk it.

So, shortly before three o'clock that afternoon they started for the mine, while I posted myself behind the field-glass to await developments.

Some thirty feet from the mill, at the mouth of the tunnel, a large log, hewn flat, had been placed as a foot-bridge across a stream of water. Just as our friends had crossed on this foot-bridge they met West face to face. Before they had time to tell their names or their business there, out came the meerschaum pipe, and up went the corner of West's mouth, while his eyes commenced to roll around as is sometimes the case with an inveterate smoker. In an instant two fingers were placed almost against his nose, and two pairs of eyes were staring at him like madmen's. West was a quick-tempered man, and not believing they were after any good he grabbed up a pick-handle lying by, and advanced upon them in a threatening manner.

Believing that they unquestionably had a lunatic to deal with, they wheeled around and beat a hasty retreat over the foot-bridge. Wheaton's friend was in the lead and crossed safely over, but Wheaton himself was not so fortunate. In his haste his foot slipped and he went off into the water, which at that place was about eight feet deep and forty feet wide. West's hostile attitude vanished when he found his enemy was likely to drown, and fearing he would be blamed for it, he promptly dropped his pick-handle and plunged in after him.

At this, Wheaton's friend shouted at the top of his voice, "Swim for your life, Wheaton, he's after you." West managed to get the water out of his mouth, and sputtered, "What! Is this Wheaton of North Bloomfield?"

They both reached the bank about the same time, pretty well water-logged, and standing in their dripping garments, they proceeded to introduce themselves to each other.

West was the first to speak: "Are you Mr. Wheaton, of the North Bloomfield Mine?"

Wheaton replied that he was. "Well, Mr. Wheaton, what does this mean?" "Well, I want to ask you what it means?" West shook his

head sadly and said, "Well, Mr. Wheaton, do you know anyone in our camp by the name of Argyle? Perhaps that acquaintance may account for the present catastrophe."

Mr. Wheaton's reply was, "Yes, I'm sorry to say I do." All this time I was observing the whole proceedings with my glass, and as I saw them advance toward the office of the mine I rang up the telephone. I could hear their laughter as they opened the telephone, and Wheaton remarked to West that he had better fix it up with me in some way in order to keep the story from leaking out.

I said, "Hello, West! anything doing down there?" "Nothing now," he replied, "There has been something doing; I suppose you saw it all, confound you. Now, on what conditions can we surrender and have this thing kept a secret?"

"Well, I'll tell you, West; I have twenty-four dollars charged up for chickens and eight dollars and fifty cents for the drinks, and if you and Wheaton will square that up and give a good layout to all the miners within fifteen miles of here I'll say nothing for two years, otherwise I'll send my report to the press to-morrow."

"Well," Wheaton said, "make out your bill and order refreshments at once; two years' secrecy goes." It is not necessary to say that he saw the mines.

I went to work at once, engaged the town hall and a string band, ordered supper to be prepared by the two hotels of the place for two hundred guests and selected two well-known business men of the camp to send out invitations for the miners and their wives to attend a ball and supper on the coming Saturday night.

This somewhat elaborate programme was duly carried out and I got the credit for giving one of the most enjoyable affairs they had had there for a long time. During the course of the evening I became acquainted with miners and prospectors who had come in from the surrounding country and with whom I had not before come in contact.

Among the number was an interesting individual by the name of Campbell, who gave me a cordial invitation to visit his place, some thirty miles distant. He gave me full directions as to the route, stating that I would pass a number of mines, would go through a beautiful forest of yellow and sugar pines, by a saw-mill where



My guides in the forest of timber.



lumber was cut for the miners, and that the place next to that, some five miles beyond, was his place. "You can't miss it; nobody ever did miss Old Campbell's place, and I don't see why you should with the directions I have given you. Be sure to come, for you can't see much around this camp and I want you to see our 'Queen of the Forest.'" This last expression piqued my curiosity but I had no time to ask him to explain and dismissed the subject with the impression that he must have referred to the fine body of timber of which he had previously spoken. I thanked him for his invitation and telling him that I would surely come we set the date of the proposed visit about thirty days hence.

It was now about mid-summer. Some four or five days after receiving the invitation from Mr. Campbell, allowing myself time to pay numerous visits to other friends and also with the intention of doing some prospecting on the journey, I procured an expert, hired men and tools and started for Mr. Campbell's place.

There were many interesting places to be seen on the road and not the least among them were some prosperous little mines of gravel and quartz, the existence of which the public were totally ignorant.

We derived great pleasure from visiting the miners in their homes. For the most part the houses were nothing to boast of, but they were comfortably furnished, and evidently the seat of happiness and contentment. They were generally ensconced in a perfect bower of flower gardens, and it was a great surprise to me to learn that fruits and vegetables of the finest varieties were raised at an elevation of from three to five thousand feet above sea level.

We stayed over night at two or three mountain homes by invitation, and all the neighbors came in to spend the evening. Their cordial greetings and their solicitous attentions to each other carried me back to rural days when people lived more for each other than they do at the present time. The sturdy miners were there with their violins, and their brawny hands wielded the bow with such dexterity that an audience of any first-class theatre would have encored them.

We prospected a number of big quartz and porphyry ledges of low-grade ore that would yield handsome profits if worked on a large scale with the latest methods of working such ore.

We also crossed a number of lava-capped ridges that held tightly in their grasp ancient

river channels, defying the man with moderate means to try to rob them of their golden treasure. And yet the miners would be tempted by old Dame Nature throwing out on the rim rock little patches of gravel here and there from the depths of old blue lead to lure them on, as one could see from the numerous drifts and tunnels that have been run into the mountains by men with more ambition than money. The little pay streaks in the rim gravel would play hide-and-seek with the prospector by giving up to him now and then some of its treasure and then darting back to the bottom from where it came, out of his reach, there to remain until the miner would be reinforced with sufficient capital to penetrate its depths.

Many good claims lay yet undeveloped owing to the fact that most of the rich old blue leads require bed-rock tunnels run from two to ten thousand yards long to reach the bottom of the channel and have drainage for the water.

There is an old saying that "bad news travels faster than good news"; that is the reason one hears of many mines which have failed and ruined all connected with them. Nevertheless there are hundreds of paying mines where the owners have good reasons for not telling what the output is.

In passing through the timber forest before referred to I saw that sugar and yellow pine largely predominated and that the trees were very large and tall. It was a common sight to see a mighty trunk rising straight up into the air to a height of one hundred and fifty feet before the first branch shot out from it.

We finally arrived at the saw-mill, and after remaining there a day and night, left early on the second morning and arrived at Campbell's place promptly at the appointed time.

I found a good substantial loghouse which many years before had been constructed as a store and living-house by hunters and trappers. I was greeted with a hearty welcome and proceeded at once to make myself at home. I noticed Mr. Campbell had just finished dressing a good-sized deer and was cutting some off for supper.

After the evening meal, in which the delicious venison played a prominent part, we sat talking about everything in general, and presently the miners and prospectors began to drop in by twos and threes to hear the news and discuss the happenings of the day until ten or fifteen of them were gathered beneath the hospitable roof.



Old Campbell's place.



I preferred to listen rather than talk, for I soon observed that many of them were well-informed men who had seen much of the glitter of the outside world in their younger days. They were interesting to me because they were so natural; they seemed to live so near to Nature; they were ideals of real manhood. They asked of one another if they had lately heard or seen anything of this man or that man, calling them by name, whom they knew to be alone in the mountains prospecting, and it was suggested that if nothing was heard of them by the next day they must get together and go out and see if anything had happened to them. I thought how few there are who have that whole-souled feeling for their fellowmen.

I judge it was about nine o'clock in the evening when I was startled by hearing a woman's voice raised in song, accompanied by the gentle touch of her finger-tips upon the strings of a guitar.

The effect upon the men was electrical. Conversation ceased at once; their hats, which for the most part had remained upon their heads, now found new resting-places, and many rose to their feet. The door presently opened and a

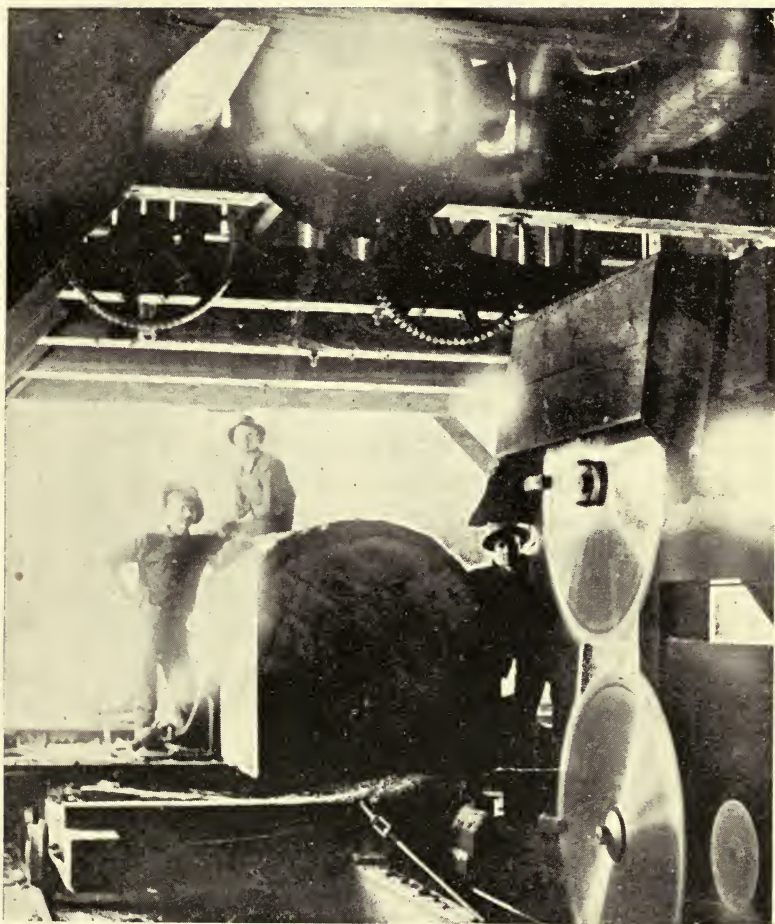
beautiful woman entered. After cordially greeting the old miners and thanking them for their many kindnesses and inquiring after the absent ones, she was introduced to me as their "Forest Queen."

After she bade us good-night I learned from Mr. Campbell the story of an old abandoned mine and of the girl who was now known far and wide as the "Forest Queen."

"Many years ago," he said, "I was running a kind of trading-post here at this very place for a few miners, trappers and hunters on the creek. I had some traps set away up in the mountains, some fifteen miles from here over the ridge.

"You see in winter time, when there has been a good hard snow, we think nothing of a fifteen or twenty-mile run on snowshoes. I had not been to my traps for a long time, on account of a heavy storm, and the weather being good and the snow settled, I provisioned myself for two or three days and started out. On arriving at the top of the ridge I noticed a bear making down the other side toward a deep canyon, and I followed, pursuing him very closely.

"The snow being hard, he was able to evade me by dodging here and there in the thick brush,



Sawmill.



so I was not able to get a good shot at him. You see, it is necessary to be sure of a shot at a bear when alone. I desired to get close to him and in clear ground before I fired. On we went, down the mountain, swifter and swifter, until I began to imagine myself John Gilpin in real earnest. That side of the mountain was unexplored, so far as any of us knew, and I thought I was miles from any human being on earth, when to my surprise, right in front of me, not fifty feet away, a little blue smoke appeared to be rising right up out of the snow under the edge of a steep cliff.

"I stopped in wonderment and said to myself, 'This is surely a branch of Hades.' Being alone, some fifty feet above the place from whence the smoke issued, I concluded to approach cautiously.

"The idea occurred to me that there might be bandits and perhaps, for all I knew, there might be a cave full of them. However, I approached quietly so that I would not be perceived until I could ascertain what it was.

"After reconnoitering for some time I noticed a pile of fresh gravel and it looked fine—looked as though it was rich in gold, and as I swung around a big boulder a sight met my gaze that I shall never forget.

"A little cabin was situated near the mouth of a tunnel and the passage-way between the two had been timbered over, but was now partly buried under the snow, and before the door of the house, on bended knees, a frail little woman was engaged in prayer. I listened. She was praying for relief for one who had gone out in the storm for assistance, and who had not returned; she prayed for the life of her baby that it might be saved from starvation. At that I could not listen longer. I knew something must be done at once so I approached. Seeing me she rose to her feet, gasped out something—what I could not understand—and then swooned away.

"Upon entering the cabin I found several men prostrated by hunger and so exhausted they could hardly articulate.

"I took in the whole situation at once and went to work with a will. I rebuilt the fire, took off my pack of provisions, such as I had, and administered a stiff dose of whisky to all the unfortunates, allowing them to partake of the food but sparingly. After the little woman had been comfortably seated by the fire she soon revived sufficiently to tell her story.

“She said her husband, brothers, baby and herself had come across the mountains late in the Fall. Heavy storms had overtaken them and they concluded to camp where they were, as it seemed a promising spot to tunnel in and see if they could strike gold. They were running short of provisions so one of the brothers started out in the storm for help. Then she cautiously inquired, ‘Did he send you?’

“I replied, ‘I have not seen him.’ Then she exclaimed, ‘He has lost his way in the storm and we are starving! Just before you arrived my poor dear husband brought out the last barrow of dirt and I saw gold in it, so we can pay you, sir, for assistance. Can you help us?’

“‘The men have not eaten for several days so as to save food for baby and me. Poor little thing, she is so quiet now I fear the worst, and only a few days ago she was lying here cooing while I was out there with the poor men doing what I could to encourage them to work, for I felt they would strike it. They are so brave and so kind, sir.’

“One poor fellow who was more dead than alive said, ‘We will trust you! We know you will help us.’ I proposed to them to leave what

provisions I had and to take the little one home with me (it could not have been more than fifteen miles away), to gather a few men as a rescue party with whose assistance the entire family could be conveyed to my camp.

“The mother at first demurred at parting with her babe, but the men finally overcame her objections, and when I looked at her pinched and grief-stricken face I mentally resolved that if the power were mine to do so, help should come before another sunrise. Then I bundled the little one upon my back, after having seen that she was warmly wrapped up, and started upon my journey. The mother watched us until we had passed out of sight; I turned once and called out, ‘Keep up your heart; I will be back by morning at the very latest.’ She appeared to brighten up at that.

“It was four o’clock P. M. when the race began—a race for life or death. As I zigzagged the mountains on my snowshoes to reach the top, the sad sight I had seen in the cabin appeared before me every now and then, and I offered up a prayer to Heaven as I had not done in years that God would give me strength to withstand the ordeal before me.

"I was younger then than now, and the pleadings of the unfortunates touched every chord in my heart. The unselfish devotion of the little woman who had stood by to encourage those broken-hearted men, until she fell exhausted from hunger, with no thought of herself, spurred me on to save the babe she loved and to give succor to the others as soon as possible.

"In passing the trappers and prospectors I gave the alarm as I ran, telling them to follow me to my place in haste.

"The baby was turned over to my wife's care, and having gathered a few men and everything necessary, the rescue party started soon after dark. We arrived about midnight, and before another day all the occupants of the cabin had been transferred to a place of comfort and safety. But the deprivation proved too great for the little mother and she survived but a short time. The father lingered many months, then he, too, died. The body of the poor fellow who had started out to obtain relief was discovered the next Spring when the snow had melted. The baby, however, grew and thrived.

"The mine proved to be one of the richest that had been discovered here in many years, and as

they happened to strike the end of a channel running south a beautiful little town sprang up. A very contented lot of miners lived there, but it has been abandoned now for years. The pay all went out in one night.

"Well, you see, I saved the child, and she has been our sunshine from that day to this. She has always been an angel of mercy and she earned the name of 'Forest Queen' from the old miners and has never know any other.

"In the prosperous days of the mine she received a fair education. Her every want was supplied by the old miners, all of whom claimed an interest in her—and why not? Nothing could prevent her from going to the bedside of a sick and crippled neighbor, and her lovable nature endeared her to all.

"She and a little fair-haired boy of one of the miners were the only children in camp, and they roamed the mountains hand in hand from childhood to womanhood and manhood."

"Many asked her hand in marriage, but she would always tell them to get the consent of her fathers of the forest, meaning us old miners who loved her as our own. You can imagine how hard it would be for a newcomer to get that consent.



The mountain home of the "Forest Queen."



Finally, her ever-faithful playmate asked her to be his wife, and the young couple received our sanction and blessing. They were married, and their home is over there across the creek. They both are just as dear to us as ever, and she is still our 'Forest Queen'."

"I think the old abandoned mine would interest you," continued Mr. Campbell, "and we will start up there to-morrow morning, if you like. I promised to show you something if you came."

The next morning, well provisioned, we started out. The sun was shining brightly from a clear, blue sky, and the gentle murmur of the zephyrs through the beautiful foliage of the large pines was in itself inspiring. About dark we approached the little old desolate village where at one time lights had twinkled from many cabin windows; now not a single lamp shed its solitary ray upon the passer-by. Upon entering its narrow streets, with the houses leaning or fallen from age and neglect, it impressed one as being a city of the dead.

Mr. Campbell rode up near a big tree at the mouth of a tunnel, and dismounting said, "We will camp here." "Why not take one of those old houses?" I asked.

"What! we camp in one of those cabins? Never! That place (pointing to the little village) is as sacred to us old miners as your own burying-ground where your loved ones are laid to rest. I will show you the cabins to-morrow, not now. We'll go into the tunnel to-night if you like."

"How far?" I asked. "A mile and a half," he replied. I shuddered at that, but being aware that he was an old miner I knew he would not go into unnecessary danger.

So after supper we lighted our candles and started into the tunnel. As we did so he remarked, "Many a day I have worked in this mine, and I often come to see it, for the days I worked here when it was in full blast were the happiest of my life."

We picked our way over timbers and piles of debris where the walls had caved in, with torrents of water running everywhere. As we neared the end the roar of the water, constantly growing louder, became deafening, and before I had time to inquire the cause of the noise we came to where there was a cavity cut out of the solid cement some fifty feet wide and about as high, and there were two huge thirty-six-foot



Old abandoned mine.



water-wheels now badly fallen to decay, while two or three hundred inches of water were pouring out of the cement above them as though in noisy protestation of their inability to revolve.

The sound of the water so far underground made a certain feeling of dread come over me, and yet the charm of the place was indescribable.

We were then about a thousand feet from the top of the mountain. That channel had paid from where it was first struck for one and a half miles running south, when one night, all of a sudden, they ran into solid cement. Word went to the little village from the night shift that the channel was lost. It sent a gloom over the once happy camp, but they would not be daunted by that, so they ran four hundred feet into the cement and sank down sixty feet, where they found a channel much larger running at right angles which had cut the former one in two. This was much richer, consisting of an altogether different kind of gravel from the one they had lost.

Once more their hopes were at a high pitch but they had still a great obstacle to contend with, and that was the water in the lower channel, which they fully realized might be difficult to overcome.

So they conceived the idea of putting in a big water-wheel and running a tunnel above in the cement for water to propel it. They succeeded in getting plenty of water in the cement, but as they sank to the bed-rock in the new channel and began to breast out, the water increased and then they placed another water-wheel beside the first. This long struggle had disheartened many; some sickened and died from exposure in fighting the water and others left their homes and everything in them, as it was easier to get things in than out of the camp. Finally the power of the two immense pumps driven by the water-wheels was insufficient to overcome the water, and as the sad tidings reached the village from the workers it sent such a gloom over the miners that everything they were doing at the time of receiving the news stopped like a clock with a broken mainspring.

In our wanderings through the tunnel and numerous drifts Mr. Campbell would point out this and that place where it had been rich and where this one and that one of his friends had worked, giving their names.

The next morning he beckoned me to follow and we started to go thorough the deserted village, some four hundred yards distant.

The old man led the way with bowed head to a little old cabin, leaning with age, and as he entered he took off his hat and remarked, "You can look around, but you must not touch anything." The cabin was as the owner left it, except for age and dust. The bed he had slept on; a few half-burned sticks in the fire-place; the old cupboard on the wall, with pans and dishes; a pair of musty boots peeping out from under the bed; an old hat hanging on a nail upon the wall; a little rude table, with pen and ink, some opened and some unopened letters lying there. I ventured to speak, but my friend raised his hand. I knew he was deeply affected, and we walked away. When we were outside he said, "The miner who lived in this cabin, poor fellow, was so brave and good. He was drowned in the mine the night we had to abandon it. He fought the water to the last. He did not care, he said, for himself, but there were so many depending upon the success of the mine. He was buried up there on the mountain side," pointing to a little graveyard.

He next led me to a row of once prosperous business houses, built from round logs, with porches in front. The first one we entered was

a store and post-office. The dust-covered shelves around the walls here and there still held remnants of wares undisturbed for many years; a desk with a day-book and ledger, which I was allowed to look through, upon a promise of careful handling. There were unopened letters in the post-office, many of them being addressed to those who were resting in the little graveyard on the mountain side. He next took me into an adjoining billiard hall and saloon. There were the bar and fixtures, the billiard-table in the center of the hall, with the cues and balls lying on the table, and but for the dust and decayed condition of the building you would think a game had just been finished.

Mr. Campbell walked over to the opposite side of the table to where I stood, and pointing to a cue, stated that he had played the last game and with that cue he had made the last shot, when the news came that the mine was flooded and the men all driven out and one of their number drowned, while hundreds of inches of water were following them out of the tunnel. "You may know, sir, from what you have seen here, that everything stopped short in this place on receiving those tidings."

After showing me many other relics of the camp we walked up the mountain side to the village of the dead.

I sat down on a stump in the graveyard of the old abandoned mine and looked down on the little deserted village below in that almost inaccessible spot. It looked both romantic and pathetic to me, and what still added to the pathos, the wind moaned a gentle lullaby through the tall pines on the mountain tops above me. The crudely cut names on the rough rock headstones of the graves before me were the same I had seen on the uncalled-for and unopened letters in the village post-office.

MY FIRST SWEETHEART AND SCENES OF MY CHILDHOOD

In the month of April, 1853, near a beautiful little river known as the Miami, running through a fertile portion of the grand old State of Ohio, two sturdy sons of toil settled, with their families, to build homes for themselves and loved ones.

This particular section of the country at that time was as the master hand of Nature had left it—with immense groves of virgin timber, of walnut, hickory, oak, ash and sugar maple.

Along the clear running streams tributary to the Miami were patches here and there barren of timber, which looked as though they had been ordained for the grain fields of future generations.

These pioneers had but one yoke of oxen each, a wagon, a plow and very few of the most common farming utensils. Under similar conditions

the task of subduing the wilderness would to us at this day seem impossible, yet our ancestors did not hesitate at its magnitude.

Spring was fast disappearing before our settlers had selected their land, and it became necessary to form some plan of co-operation as there was much to be accomplished before the next Winter should come on; and woe betide the unfortunate found unprepared for its rigors.

It was decided to call together the two families (which consisted of my father, mother and myself, our new friend, Mr. Summers, and his wife and their little fair-haired, blue-eyed daughter, about the same age as myself) to arrange as to the duties to be performed by each, in order to bring about the object so greatly desired.

First, it was decided to live in the wagons during Summer, to camp close to the creek on account of the wood and water and to select the places barren of timber for the fields.

Second, Mrs. Summers would do the cooking for all; my mother's part was to put in a little early garden and tend the chickens. The heaviest portion of the work, of course, fell to my father and Mr. Summers, who were to plow and plant the grain and then fence in the fields with rails, split from the trees.

After all the above details had been thoroughly discussed and satisfactorily settled a silence came upon the little group for a few moments, when a sweet childish voice rang out on the still night air, "Papa, dear, you have forgotten to give me something to do; won't it be my home, too? Can't I help make it?"

Mr. Summers took his little girl in his arms and kissed her, exclaiming, "Dear little one, what can you do?"

"Oh! I can do lots; on warm days you must have good cool water to drink, and I heard you say there was none up at the field, so I can bring you water every day."

The little girl charmed me by her kind offer and sweet manners, but somehow at the time I would rather she had not made such a proposition, for I had from that moment a kind of foreboding that my father would intimate that he had something of a like nature for me to do.

As it was growing late I suddenly got awfully sleepy and did not hear.

The little girl ventured to ask my father if I was a good boy. He replied that I was the best boy he had. "Yes," she said, "but you have only one."

I awakened a little later, as my father had a knack of rousing me that never failed.

So ended the first night under the new régime.

The next morning we awoke to find a clear blue sky above us, with the warm bright rays of the sun peeping through the fast-budding branches and the birds flitting from tree to tree, singing their sweet songs as Nature had taught them.

Never shall I forget that dimple-faced child watching and pointing out the different kinds of birds and commenting on their qualities as songsters, catching now and then a note and warbling with them in their matin lay.

We knew but little of the Summers family at this time; we had met them journeying on the road with the same object in view as our own and the community of interests drew us together at once.

As we found them in every way pleasant and agreeable our friendship grew stronger day by day.

Mr. Summers was a man of about the same age as my father—thirty-five years. He was a short, well-set man with a pleasing face and manners and open, honest countenance; he wore

his hat on the back of his head, and was brimful of ready wit and humor; he could crack a joke and take one with equal readiness.

Mrs. Summers was short of stature, with a sweet, kind, motherly face, modest and retiring, and rather inclined to dry wit.

My father was tall, well proportioned, stately and courteous in manner, and would enjoy a joke the next day after its occurrence—that is, if he saw the point.

My mother was of medium size and graceful in form and manners; her hair had just the least tinge of the golden hue, and her disposition was as sunny as her face.

Our covered wagons stood close together, about two hundred feet from the stream, on a beautiful little flat where there was no underbrush, but which was covered with large sugar maples. The short, green, carpet-like grass and the towering trees surrounding it made it altogether a lovely spot, and under these trees Sarah and I had our swing and teeter-board and there we spent the hours allotted to us for play, while the beautiful wild birds of the forest entertained us with their songs.



The first camp in our new settlement.



During the months of April and May we plowed, planted and gardened. By the end of May we had seeded fifteen acres of corn, ten acres of wheat and much garden-stuff. By the end of September we had a five-rail fence around the twenty-five acres planted, and the corn laid by, as they call it—that is, corn after it comes up is usually plowed four times and then left to grow and ripen.

Everything had run smoothly with me up to this time, when unfortunately I violated some rule of the camp, or did something else not to my father's liking, and received a thrashing for the infraction. It almost broke my heart for Sarah to see me licked, and the whipping was laid on all the harder because I would not squeal while she was looking on. My father thought I had some protection under my clothing, as had happened once before upon a similar occasion, and he continued to punish me until my little playmate begged him to desist.

But my troubles did not end there. Up to this time I had had lots of fun with Mr. Summers, whom I admired immensely, but he now began to tease me before Sarah, in a sly way at different times about my being licked, so that I fully

resolved to get even with him if possible. I could not sass him, nor could I stop him, for he teased everybody, more or less, with his jokes and pranks. After much cogitation I concluded the only way to do would be to stir up trouble between him and my father, thinking that my father would deal out to him some of the same medicine which he had so lavishly bestowed on me. What to do or how to do it I did not know, but I made up my mind to watch my chance; and it came.

I noticed that on a number of occasions after my father had gone to bed in the wagon he would put his feet out under the curtains at the end, and just as sure as Mr. Summers would discover his feet protruding, which was often the case, he would take a twig and tickle my father's feet. Naturally this would awaken my paternal ancestor and he would call out, "You Summers! if you don't stop your pranks I will play one on you." Then Mr. Summers would chuckle at the idea of my father playing a prank on him. So one night I thought if I could carry out my plan without being detected I would get even with my tormentor. I'll just get some charcoal and mash it up, make a solution and paint my father's feet black

and he'll think Mr. Summers did it sure, and he'll just annihilate him.

I mixed my solution and waited for the opportunity.

It came one warm moonlight night. My father had worked very hard that day and naturally slept very soundly. He managed to work his feet further out the wagon than usual, so I took my charcoal solution and some feathers from a brush and, creeping softly up, proceeded to paint his feet. I finished my job in good shape, unperceived, as I thought, by anybody, and went to bed in great glee.

The following morning was beautiful and bright and Mr. Summers arose earlier than usual. I heard him approach the wagon; then there was an interval of silence, during which I suppose he was examining the strange objects protruding from the cover. Then arose peal after peal of laughter which quickly awakened the entire camp.

I lay in my bed in the wagon, one moment trembling with fear, the next ejaculating to myself, "Old fellow, your time has come!"

My father, hearing this unusual racket, knew that something out of the common had happened and was not averse to having his share of the fun if there was any on hand.

Upon springing from the wagon he discovered the occasion of Mr. Summers' hilarity. That gentleman was lying on the ground gasping for breath.

My father, being quick-tempered, approached the supposed malefactor with uplifted hand. Mr. Summers begged him to desist until he felt better. Father finally thought better of his rash move and walked toward the creek. As he did so Mr. Summers hollered after him that he knew it was a rather bad case, but he did not think it had gone so far as that. I ventured to peep from under the blankets in time to see my father turn and shake his finger at Mr. Summers. "Mind you, Summers, this is only borrowed; I will pay you back if I live." It is not necessary for me to say that I felt easier, never dreaming for a moment that that smooth man Summers had his head sticking out from under his wagon-cover and was watching me all the time I was performing my hazardous task; nor was I apprised of his knowledge of the affair for a year and a half afterward, and the predicament I was placed in was embarrassing in the extreme.

During October Mr. Summers and my father devoted all their time to cutting and hewing logs to build their houses.

In those days there was no difference of opinion as to what constituted a home, nor to the duties to be performed by each and every member of the family, for they knew equal toil and equal responsibility brought equal happiness.

I will endeavor to describe to you those old homes and their charms.

The houses in those days were usually constructed upon the following plan: There were two rooms, each twenty by thirty feet, with a passage-way about twelve feet wide between them; both rooms and passage-way were covered by one roof. This passage-way was called an entry.

The boards for the floor were split from white ash trees, called punchings, laid down and adzed off on top after being placed in their proper position. The logs for the walls were hewn flat on both sides; the cracks chinked and daubed. Anyone mechanically inclined could build a comfortable house and make a very nice job of it in this way.

There was a porch, running the full length of the house, twelve feet wide.

All houses were built facing the rising sun. Large fire-places were constructed out of rock, at each end of the building, when fire-proof rock

could be found; otherwise they were made from what we called split sticks plastered thoroughly inside and out with clay. They would usually accommodate sticks of wood five or six feet long, and were sufficiently deep to take in a back log two feet in diameter.

The roof and ceilings were of shaved shingles, made from oak or walnut trees.

About the time that my father and Mr. Summers had each sufficient material cut for a house of the kind above mentioned, emigrants had commenced to pour in from different sections of the country. It was customary in all new settlements to give a man a day to raise his house or barn as the case might be, and any work done for the owner of the house after that would be paid for in corn, fodder or potatoes. So, as our crop was about ripened and would yield more than sufficient for our requirements, we got up big dinners and invited the emigrants to the house-raising, and kept all hands busy at work until Mr. Summers' and my father's houses were entirely completed.

As the newcomers had little or no money, and were in need of fodder for their stock and corn and wheat for breadstuff, my father and Mr.

Summers decided to build themselves barns from hewed logs, and by the new year each was in his new house and the barns were completed.

The latter were built in a pen-like fashion, about forty feet square, the logs laid close together, and each pen about forty feet apart. The whole thing was roofed over, leaving between the two buildings a space about forty feet with a shed on each side the full length of the building, sixteen feet wide and one hundred and twenty feet long. This space between the two buildings was used as a threshing floor. The first threshing was done with what they call flails, made from a green hickory stick three inches in diameter at the butt and six or seven feet long; about three feet from the butt it was mashed with an ax for a space of about twelve inches, to make it limber. The barn floor was of hard packed clay. Sheaves of wheat would be cut open and spread around in a ring about thirty feet in diameter; these wide projecting roofs protected the threshing floor from storms. Each neighbor would have what they called threshing bees; all hands would go with their flails and flay wheat. The flailing custom was soon abolished and horses used instead. Two or

three riders and as many horses as they could lead tramped round and round on the grain; one man stood in the center to keep the horses on the grain and to turn it over until finished.

My father and Mr. Summers located their houses some three hundred yards apart. The township line ran between them and it was hoped that at no distant day the country highway would be surveyed and laid out near-by, which would materially add to the value of the land.

At those house and barn-raising they usually took two hours for dinner at noon, and the time not devoted to eating was occupied in resting and story-telling. I remember one story more particularly than any other, relative to a dog that our friend Mr. Summers owned. The conversation upon this particular day drifted upon coon-hunting.

Our friend Summers remarked, "Now, gentlemen, when you come to talk about coon-hunting and your coon dogs, I say I have a dog that can kill more coons in a shorter space of time than any other two dogs in this settlement."

Mrs. Summers interposed, "Why, Mr. Summers, that dog is too lazy to kill coons. He is too lazy to stand up to eat; he lies down when he



The first homes in the settlement.



eats. He is even too lazy to bark; I don't think I've heard that dog bark since you owned him. I've even tried to give him away. I presume the reason I failed to do so was that my proffered gift happened to be always to some one who was a good judge of a dog."

Summers replied that he was the largest and finest looking dog in the settlement. Mrs. Summers said that was no criterion to go by, for there are many beautiful things that are worthless. But Mr Summers was stubborn and maintained his point. "Now, gentlemen, in order to prove to you that Mrs. Summers' slander on my dog is not true we'll just go out coon-hunting some fine night, and I'll guarantee after that coon hunt Mrs. Summers will have no trouble about disposing of my beautiful dog, if she still desires to do so."

Not very long after that, one afternoon about three o'clock, some of the boys reported that they had found two big hollow trees plumb full of coons; that they were guarding the trees so that the coons could not get away until the neighbors were told, so as to share in the sport of catching them, and all who could spare the time were soon on hand with their dogs and axes.

Mr. Summers, with his big dog, was the main feature of the occasion. They discovered in one tree a small young coon, and decided they would hold Mr. Summers' dog until the tree with the young coon in it had fallen, allowing the other dogs to finish him. Having seen one very large coon in the second tree, they decided that was the coon which Mr. Summers' famous dog should be permitted to annihilate.

When the first tree was felled, and while the dog which had to fight the young coon was making his advances, Summers' dog reared and foamed and howled to be released from his master's grasp to sail into the affray. It was not long, however, before the young coon was no more.

Now all eyes centered upon the other tree with the big old coon in it, which was now just tottering and ready to fall. When it struck the ground and the dust caused by the fall had cleared away everyone stood anxiously watching for the big old coon's appearance, lest he should slip out and steal away.

Summers was more anxious than all the rest (for he wanted Mrs. Summers to see his dog's coon-killing qualities); this was a new country and

coons were a great pest in the grain fields and chicken roosts. A dog that had the ability to kill them by the drove was not to be sneered at. The old coon finally made his appearance, deliberately walked out from the hollow of the tree, stretched himself up and took a good look at each member of the crowd as unconcerned as though there was not a coon-killer in the place. At the sight of that coon Summers' dog sat down and whined. Summers let go of him and tried to urge him on. Mrs. Summers, who had followed her husband to see the performance of his canine prodigy was convulsed with laughter. By this time the coon had spied that big dog near the stump of the tree; instead of beating a hasty retreat, as everybody expected, he showed a fine set of teeth about an inch long and started down the tree on a canter in the direction of the dog, and when within ten feet he sprang upon the dog's back and fastened his teeth in his neck. With a series of yelps that might have been heard a mile away the dog took to the woods toward his home, with the coon still clinging to him. This took Summers so completely by surprise that for once in his life his ready wit failed him. When he recovered he politely informed his

neighbors that his dog always took his coons home to kill them. However, Mr. Summers lost no time when he got home to write to the friend who had given him the dog and had recommended him as one of the finest coon dogs on earth, that the dog had ruined his reputation in the neighborhood.

Summers soon received a reply from his friend stating that he was very sorry that the dog had not turned out to be a good coon dog. For he had been taught from childhood that the Almighty created everything for some purpose, and as he had tried this dog for everything under the heavens except coon-hunting and found him worthless upon every other occasion, he thought, of course, he would be a good coon dog.

Many a time Summers related this, which he considered was a good joke on his friend.

As Autumn drew near, the hickory nuts and walnuts ripened and fell to the ground and Sarah and I busied ourselves gathering them for the Winter. By the time the snow fell we had quite a stock on hand.

Mr. Summers and my father had made a number of baskets out of splits from white oak trees, and we alternately had a corn shelling, first

at Mr. Summers' and then at our house. The corn would be carried into the large kitchen in big baskets and be shelled by my father and Mr. Summers before the big log fires, while Mrs. Summers and my mother busied themselves with their knitting. Sarah and myself in the meantime picked out the bright red ears of corn and cracked nuts with a hammer upon the hearth.

The next day, weather permitting, the sacks of corn would be loaded upon the wagon either by my father or Mr. Summers, who took turns in going to the mill to get the corn ground into breadstuff.

So the many long winter evenings in the new settlement were passed in shelling corn, making baskets and cracking nuts, while certain hours of the evening were allotted to Sarah and myself for studying.

The next Summer my father and Mr. Summers planted about two or three acres of orchards in a variety of fruits. We had the lady-blush in those days.

A year and a half from the time of our arrival in the new settlement about twenty families had established their homes as near to us as the lines

of the land permitted. Additions were built to these homes from time to time as necessity required, making little nooks here and there with porches; and the old-fashioned morning glories, planted and trained by our mothers will long be remembered. Then there began to be some talk of the need of a schoolhouse. All this time my father had not mentioned the cause of Mr. Summers' hilarity that bright Summer morning by the creek and I began to wonder if he had forgotten it; neither did Mr. Summers ever allude to it. Finally a meeting of the neighbors was called at our house for the purpose of arranging the details for building a settlement schoolhouse.

There was a big fire burning brightly in the fire-place and benches were placed to seat all who came. The heads of all the families in the community were present.

This first meeting in the new settlement was of great importance in the minds of some of those present; their grave faces, caused by the anxiety of the final result, amused me, and, boy-like, I proceeded to have a little fun.

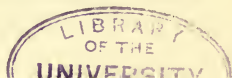
I took a pin and bent it like a horseshoe, then turned the point up so that when it was laid down on a bench the point would stand upright.

A rude table was placed at one end of the room for the chairman's use, and my father ordered me to place a short bench behind it, and in so doing I laid my horseshoe pin down on the bench unobserved by any one.

Mr Patrick Moon, a dignified old gentleman, was then selected to govern the meeting. He took his seat, but to my surprise he made no move nor outcry as I expected he would when coming in contact with the pin-point; in some way he sat down a little to one side of it. The meeting was called to order and the business proceeded with.

It was not very long before there was a heated debate as to the location of the schoolhouse, and two or three men jumped to their feet at once, all trying to talk at the same time.

The chairman rapped for order and moved restlessly on his bench, and in one of his moves my fullest expectations were realized; he sprang to his feet with his eyes protruding, and struck the top of the table a terrible blow with his cane, bringing those excited in debate to their senses. I knew what had happened; they didn't; and I almost fell off my bench laughing. My father gave me one of those cold, stern looks which



meant business, and asked me what I meant. I replied, I wasn't laughing; my face just slipped."

The chairman suggested to my father he had better take the splinters off the top of his benches before another gathering of the kind was held. I drew a sigh of relief when he uttered those words. There was no serious damage done and the pin was not discovered, but Mr. Summers gave me a look which plainly indicated he understood what had caused the chairman's boisterous demonstration. Order was soon restored, however, and they proceeded with the business before them without further interruption.

After considering the matter thoroughly, sufficient labor was donated to build the schoolhouse, and it was understood the work should commence at once.

After the details had all been settled and the chairman was in the act of announcing an adjournment, my father arose and addressed the assemblage in his usual stately manner:

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: Inasmuch as Mr. Summers and myself were the first settlers in this beautiful valley—we having enjoyed two years of successful harvest—and having received

your valuable and appreciated services in assisting us to erect our pleasant homes, I feel it now may work some hardship upon you to grant the request that I am about to make. I will state it is my desire to have the inside walls of our new schoolhouse hewed and planed to a perfect smoothness and artistic designs painted thereon to make it attractive to our little ones. Should this request be granted, I will meet that extra expense myself. I will pay for the labor for planing and adzing the walls to a perfect smoothness, ready for the painter, giving three bushels of corn a day. I will further ask, knowing as I do my friend Mr. Summers' artistic ability and his readiness with the brush, that he be employed to paint on those walls such designs as in his judgment would be most appropriate, and for this I am willing to allow him ten bushels of corn a day for each and every day he is occupied in this work, providing he is not over fifty days doing it.

"It is also my wish, upon the completion of this schoolhouse, that the keys be turned over to the artist, my friend Mr. Summers. Now, gentlemen, I think I have shown my confidence in Mr. Summers' ability to execute this work to

the entire satisfaction of the community by offering to foot the bills."

My father's object was to embarrass Mr. Summers before the settlement, aiming, of course, to play even on him for the little artistic work supposed to have been done by Mr. Summers upon my father's feet, but little did he dream that he was dealing with a man of no mean artistic ability, who had in his youth studied under the masters of the old world.

It is needless to say my father's request was granted without a single protest, not even from Mr. Summers himself.

The next day after the meeting the committee went out in the woods to select and measure off the ground. They chose two acres on a beautiful little plateau on a section corner.

The land was covered with a fine grove of trees; a portion of it was donated by Mr. Summers, my father, Mr. Moon, chairman of the committee, and a Mr. Shylock (by name but not by nature).

Now every available man and boy stood with ax and saw in hand awaiting the decision of the schoolhouse committee, and as soon as it was rendered the two acres were blazed out and the entire force was intelligently put to work.

Some felled the trees; some hewed and others dragged them with their cattle to the building site; several with skids and yoke of oxen commenced to raise the building, and by the end of the following week the schoolhouse was ready for the artist.

The proposition of painting the walls had wrought the settlement up to a high state of excitement and many were the speculations indulged in as to the subjects of the designs.

Mr. Summers, in the meantime, had arranged to take the next grist to the mill, some forty miles away, and while there he quietly secured and brought home unobserved all the necessary materials for the work. It was understood that everybody was to be excluded from the schoolhouse until the artist had finished.

When his task was completed the colony would be notified and a grand social gathering would take place to dedicate the building. The walls were to be hung with sheeting behind which no curious eye might penetrate until the hour when the paintings should be dramatically unveiled.

I began to feel some foreboding lest, before that painting was finished some misfortune should befall me, in the way of the cat getting out of the

bag. I was somewhat older than when I first met Mr. Summers and began to study that individual very carefully.

I considered my father a very clever man although a little slow of perception.

As regards Mr. Summers' nationality I can't say, but from his ready wit and humor I imagine he must have been of the good old Irish stock. He was so genial and clever and good in all emergencies; he was judge and jury, and had endeared himself to everybody in the colony. He appeared to like me and always invited me to his home, and would let Sarah come over to our house. In that way we were almost constant companions.

One evening after supper I was about to step upon their porch when I heard her singing "My Old Kentucky Home," while her father accompanied her on the violin. I had often heard her humming little snatches of some of the old-time melodies during our hours of play, but the way she sang that time-honored piece was a revelation to me:

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,
'Tis Summer, the darkies are gay,
The corn tops' ripe and the meadow's in the bloom
While the birds make music all the day.

The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright,
By and by hard times come a knocking at the door
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night.

There was a silence; I rapped on the door. The response came in Mr. Summers' hearty tones, "Come in, my little victim." I could not even guess what he meant, but I knew there was some practical joke in store for me. The only thing I could do was to await results. I entered and found a large log fire burning brightly, and its light was caught up and reflected by the polished white ash punching floor.

Mr. Summers was sitting on one side of the fire-place with his violin in his hand, Mrs. Summers opposite running the spinning-wheel; Sarah was standing erect in front of the fire-place, ready to take the next note. Mr. Summers, however, preferred to tease rather than play on his violin. After sitting for some time I ventured to ask him what he meant by calling me "his little victim." He jocularly said, "Oh! I've made you lots of trouble." Not being entirely satisfied with his answer I said, "As it is about time, Mr. Summers, you were painting the inside of the school-house I would like to know something about the designs you are going to paint."

He replied, "Oh! it will be interesting; it will interest you; in fact the whole settlement will probably enjoy it very much more than myself." I saw a look of dejection upon his face and felt sorry for him.

Everybody had now stored their crops and Christmas and New Year were close at hand.

Mr. Summers had locked himself up in the new schoolhouse and was busily engaged in completing the task he had undertaken.

The men folks of the settlement were busily preparing wood and large back-logs, as was customary in those days, for their Christmas fires, while the women were actively engaged in making pumpkin pies and crullers.

They would visit alternately from house to house during the Christmas and New Year week, which was devoted to social amusements—the latter consisting largely of candy-pullings, dancing, popping corn, and the old-time kissing games.

So the festivities of 1854 passed and the New Year dawned, and then the settlement became anxious to know the result of the backwoodsman's painting on the inside of the schoolhouse.

They began to realize by this time that there was something between Mr. Summers and my

father which had brought this about. However, they knew there was no appearance of ill-feeling and everything pointed to fun over the matter at somebody's expense. Just what the fun would be, of course, could only be determined on the night when the schoolhouse would be thrown open to the inspection of the settlement.

On the 28th day of January, 1855, in the following brief and formal invitation, Mr. Summers notified the residents that his task was accomplished:

"Mr.———You and family are requested to be present at the settlement schoolhouse on the evening of January 29th, at eight p. m. sharp, at the formal opening of our new schoolhouse and the unveiling of the designs painted therein,

"Very truly yours,

"Summers."

In the meantime Mr. Summers had filled the large eight-foot fire-place in the schoolhouse with hickory wood, ready to be ignited with coals brought from a near-by house. The schoolhouse was provided with a large number of candles and when all were lighted and the big log fire in full blast, with its crackling hickory wood, it was altogether very attractive in appearance.

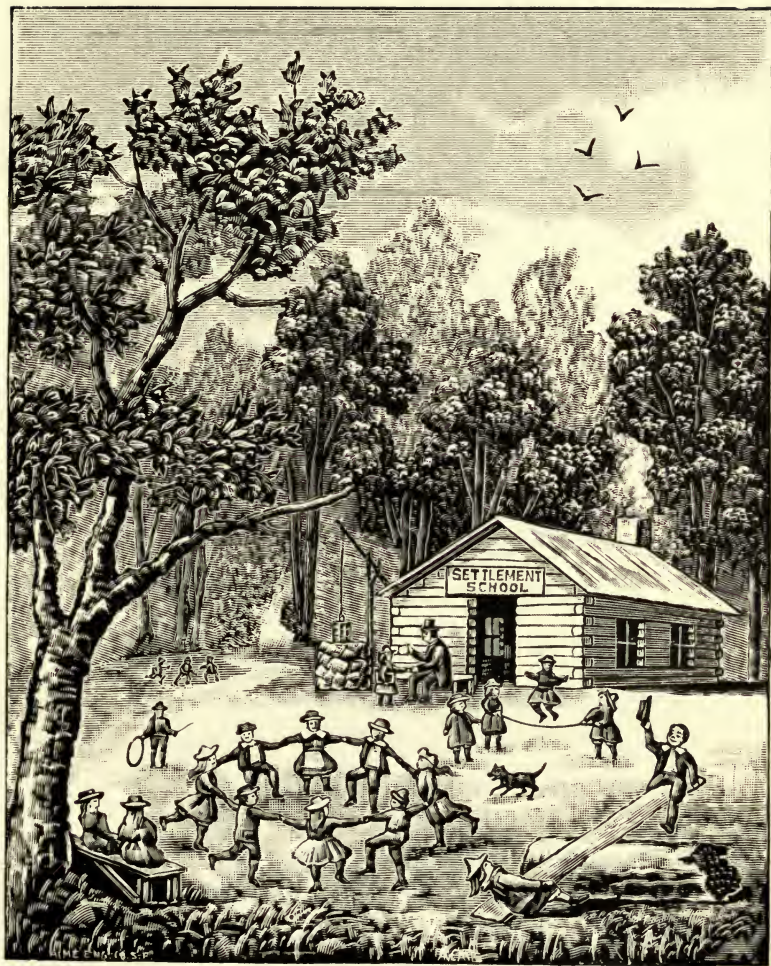
Mr. Summers had been complaining for several days to his wife of not feeling very well. She believed in his sincerity, of course, and was quite alarmed about it. But he told her and Sarah that he would feel better after awhile, and for them to go and participate in the evening's pleasure and to give Mr. Moon a letter that he would send. The sly rogue was purposely indisposed upon this particular occasion. The note addressed to Mr. Moon was as follows:

"Please open letter marked number one first and read the same to the audience before unveiling the right-hand side."

The people had all gathered promptly at the appointed time, and the fire and candles were burning brightly. Sheets were suspended from the ceiling half way to the floor on both sides of the room, covering the work, indicating plainly there was a surprise in store for someone.

Mr. Moon arose and called the house to order. Then, adjusting his horn spectacles, he read the contents of letter number one as requested by Mr. Summers. It read:

"Dear Neighbors and Friends:—I have completed my task to the best of my ability. The delineation on the right-hand side of the wall



Settlement schoolhouse.



represents, as you will see, our first settlement schoolhouse, in a beautiful forest of trees and the children at play around it.

"I trust it will please you, and I regret very much that I cannot be with you to-night, owing to illness.

"Yours truly,

"Summers."

So Mr. Moon ordered the unveiling of the walls on the right-hand side. As the sheet was removed the audience gazed, spellbound. Mrs. Summers nearly wept with delight, this being the first intimation she had ever received that her husband was an artist. My father was so surprised that he stood dumbfounded, the work was so beautiful and artistic.

Mr. Summers was eulogized and lauded to the skies; cheer after cheer went up for this clever, noble-hearted man. When my father could get his breath he paid a tribute to his neighbor that was unexcelled in those days.

The unveiling of the first picture with its beautiful workmanship had completely overshadowed for the time being the unveiling of the other side.

Mr. Moon called them to order and announced that he would read letter number two.

You could have heard a hazel-nut drop on the floor, so intense was the silence which prevailed as he read:

“Friends and Neighbors:—The left-hand side represents the two first settlers in camp in this beautiful little valley, and a clever ruse by a boy to get me thrashed by his father, for teasing him. Please spare the boy and send me my shroud.

“Yours,

“Summers.”

When the left-hand side was unveiled the picture was so vivid and real my father gasped for breath. The audience roared; Mrs. Summers alternately laughed and cried.

When order was once more restored my father arose and addressed the little assemblage as follows:

“Ladies and Gentlemen: I wish to state that I have been honestly and fairly defeated in an intended joke by the cleverest, most genial gentleman the sun ever shone on. I have no words at my command to express my admiration for this genius, and I would say if he were allowed to draw the least bit upon his imagination my breath surely would have left me.”



Painting on the wall of the schoolhouse.



This greatly relieved Mrs. Summers, but as for myself you can imagine my position, for that was the first intimation my father ever had that it was I who had done the little artistic work upon his feet for which he had nearly chastised Mr. Summers.

Nevertheless, Mr. Summers' request to spare the boy was respected. That primitive school-house was afterward the scene of many a pleasant gathering, and the occasion of the unveiling of the paintings was long remembered.

The whole settlement had by this time arranged for their maple sugar camps, which were most profitable and enjoyable.

The maple trees grew in little clusters here and there among the other timber on the different tracts of land taken up by the settlers throughout that section.

The sugar maple tree has a smooth bark and usually grows quite tall; there are no low-hanging limbs, and I have seen them as large as three and a half feet in diameter. But the best juice-producing trees are those ranging from eighteen inches to two feet at the stump.

Spiles are made from alders about an inch and a half in diameter and eighteen inches long.

The pith which lies at the core was punched out, and the result was a hollow tube.

The trees were tapped just through the sap, which is usually two or three inches thick, with an auger about an inch and a half in diameter; and into these the spiles were driven tightly, one to four spiles to a tree in proportion to its size.

The trees were tapped during the season when the sap was running, and they had to be retapped every Spring and new spiles put in.

Wooden troughs were placed under these spiles to catch the juice and these were usually emptied at night. The boiling buildings were ordinarily constructed about twenty feet wide and forty feet long, out of round poles six to ten inches in diameter, with shakes nailed over the cracks on the outside. The door was high enough for a tall man to walk into.

On each side the shake roof extended up to within eighteen inches of the ridge-pole, leaving an opening in the ridge of the roof from two to three feet wide and about ten feet long. Right in the center of the building, and under this opening in the roof, two large wooden forks, about ten inches in diameter, with four-inch prongs, were firmly set in the ground with an



Sugar camp.

eight-inch pole laid across. On this pole hung a series of kettles for boiling down the juice from the trees and the smoke from the fire under the kettles found its way out through the opening in the roof.

This little loghouse gave sufficient protection from the chilly winds and afforded a pleasant place for those whose duty it was to watch the kettles.

There was an opening on one side of this building, with ample space to admit a man passing in with two buckets.

They usually prepared wood in the daytime to burn at night under the kettles, and also to build bonfires here and there through the timber to guide their steps in the darkness from one cluster of trees to another.

These camps were never shut down from the time they were opened until the close of what was termed the season of the sugar-making.

The whole settlement looked forward every year to the pleasure of the camping season and great preparations were made for it.

Everyone vied with his neighbor in having the neatest punching seats and tables within their cabins. The young people would visit alternately

from camp to camp, the young men carrying the juice from the trees to the place of boiling down, while the young ladies who accompanied them occasionally sang some of the old-time melodies, thereby making their labors pleasant instead of irksome.

Sometimes on moonlight nights the young folks attended to the kettles while the old people strolled over to their neighbors' places to see if the juices there were sweeter than their own, and to inquire if their trees produced more to the diameter of the tree, and to comment upon the best methods of making their sugar. Frequently they had the most enjoyable dances at these camps.

Mr. Summers, being mechanically inclined and artistic as well, had constructed one of the most beautiful and commodious camps in the settlement, and he was having too much fun over there to suit my father; besides, there were more offers from the young men to carry Mr. Summers' sweet juices from his trees than he had juice to carry.

Owing to our friend's genial, jovial nature and his little Sarah's sweet songs and pleasant manners, and Mrs. Summers also being a ready entertainer, their camp became the most noted for social enjoyment in the settlement.

Story-telling in the evenings at their homes or sugar-camp gatherings were of common occurrence. Some would tell stories on themselves and others would relate jokes they had heard, leaving the main point out, and would then look surprised when no one laughed.

People were superstitious in those days and Summers, recognizing the fact, took great delight in telling blood-curdling ghost stories; he would then look around in a sly way to see what effect the story had upon his listeners.

Summers with his ghost stories was like some people telling a lie—the first and second time of telling it they knew it to be one; after telling it several times they begin to believe it really true.

My father had taken note of Summers' yarns, and having in mind the five hundred bushels of corn he was out on the schoolhouse paintings, he proceeded to get partly even.

About two hundred yards distant from the Summers' camp, along the road leading to our house, there was a very large, pronged, bushy-topped oak tree, with a hollow on one side running from the ground up through the main body. This hollow, being back from the road and partly hanging over an abrupt embankment,

was not easy of access on a dark night. My father had quietly prepared a dummy, one side jet black and the other side white; then he constructed a light ladder, and these he hid securely in the barn, which was not a very great distance from the huge old tree.

This evening Summers called upon his different neighbors asking them to come to his camp. Upon his return, about eight o'clock, he entered the cabin in a dazed condition and staggered to a seat. His face was drawn, his eyes had lost their mischievous luster and the sweat stood in beads upon his brow.

Mrs. Summers and her friends were frantic to know what had caused him to be in such a state of collapse.

As father entered the house Mrs. Summers told him that her husband had received a fright of some kind and asked him to find out if he could what had caused it. Mr. Summers pointed with his finger up the road toward the school-house.

My father glanced at him and said, "Summers your long confinement in the schoolhouse on those paintings has brought on the painter's cramps. I will go home and get something for you."

The expression on his face caused Summers to assume a more tranquil aspect. Presently shouts were heard from the neighbors and the tramping of feet coming toward the camp, each one trying to relate what they had seen.

Father, instead of going for the medicine, returned to the tree and frightened the neighbors as they passed to the camp. This particular night being dark my father climbed into the tree, hung his dummy on some pulleys and cords, the latter running down through the hollow of the tree into the cavity, where he ensconced himself out of sight and where he was well protected. As the visitors proceeded to Mr. Summers' camp this hideous thing was swung to and fro, while unearthly noises, seemingly coming from the bowels of the earth, saluted their ears.

The dummy every now and then disappeared, only to reappear again more mystifying than ever. The whole settlement was in a furor of excitement. Every time the terrifying object made its appearance shots were fired into it; but with a screech and a bound it would retreat into the thick branches of the tree and disappear, only to make its appearance again in a few minutes.

Finally a chance shot cut the cord by which it was suspended. It came crashing down through the branches of the tree, frightening the crowd, and they scattered in all directions.

Thereupon there uprose a hearty laugh near the tree. They investigated, and found my father roaring with laughter and the tears streaming down his cheeks, as Summers had laughed that morning by the creek; only father enjoyed it more because the people now saw Mr. Summers in his vanquished condition, as he had been seen upon the night of the unveiling of the paintings.

The dummy ghost taught both young and old that the return of the departed in such a manner was more of a fiction than a reality.

All returned to Summers' camp where the big bonfires were glowing, and the evening was spent in their usual social way, the children playing "puss-in-the-corner" and "hide-and-go-seek."

The rosy-cheeked maidens and young men were gathered in groups talking about a certain event which they thought was soon to take place, while the old folks were whispering and nodding to each other as though there was a surprise in store for someone.

One rosy-cheeked damsel was blushing and looking about anxiously as though waiting for someone, when in came Mr. Shylock's son. Walking up to her he said, "Sarah, it is all settled; I have just come back from 'Little Blue,' where I have located a piece of land, and now (taking her by the hand), good friends we want your blessing and invite you all to the house-raising."

Mr. and Mrs. Summers were congratulated and all the friends promised to lend their services to the house-raising the next day.

The following morning both the young and old men of the settlement were seen going cheerfully along to erect the new home for the young couple, and each member of the little community contributed to the furnishings. In a week's time their's was the happiest of weddings. All the settlement, as one big family, joined in heart-felt wishes for the new couple, and one more home was added to the settlement.

Is there a pen capable of describing those old homes, their pleasures and their charms, their maple-sugar making, the orchards producing the sweetest of fruits, the gardens, the loveliest old-fashioned flowers, the song of the birds amid the clearing of the fields? Has it ever been described as it really was?

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELER

I was reared in a rural way, but the ambition of my life, when a boy, was to become a commercial traveler. I had often hung around the hotels in the village near where I lived and listened to the yarns and discussions of the gentlemen of the road—of money expended, and how they disposed of the same in their expense accounts; the rebukes they had received from their employers; of the interesting people who had touched them by their geniality, cleverness and sociability; and of the fun they had had at this or that place.

I was just freezing to get on the road and find the funny spot.

I had noticed that, as a rule, the commercial man was young, handsome and dressy. As regards myself I was not exactly prepossessing in appearance. I thought I could improve my manners, but my form I could not. How true it

is that some people dress to improve their appearance, but instead often become caricatures!

Did you ever see a certain type of man with a plug hat on, or an old lady wearing a girl's bonnet? Ah! it is perhaps as well that we cannot see ourselves as others see us.

However, I tired of doing the same thing over and over again every year—plowing, planting and mowing; listening to the low of the cows upon their home-coming in the evening; the neigh of the horse in the pasture; the bark of the old farm dog at the passer-by; and the crow of the rooster in the tree opposite my window at the break of day. All of these had become inexpressibly irksome to me, and I wished to hear them no more. I wanted to get out into the world; I longed for what I considered a larger sphere of action; and I resolved to get a position on the road if I could. But how to obtain one without having some experience in that line was more than I could tell.

One day, while glancing over a New York paper, an advertisement caught my eye. It read as follows: "Wanted—A young man to go on the road; experience not necessary. Address Foxey & Co., New York."

I thought of that funny spot in the commercial man's life and I wrote at once to the address given, stating that I had been reared in a rural way without any experience of city or commercial life, but if they would give me a trial I would start for New York without delay.

In a few days I received a reply to come on and if they did not employ me they would pay my fare both ways. My small preparations required but little time and I soon arrived at the office of Foxey & Co.

It was a very large store; the floor space looked almost as big as one of Dad's ten-acre fields. They had all kinds of goods and things to sell; but the stuff did not look very new; it had every appearance of having been on hand for a long time.

I thought, "By Jove! it will be a pretty hard job for a new beginner to sell old goods; however, I will hear what they have to say."

I went into the office. Here were old Foxey and his partner, both men well along in years, but who, nevertheless, appeared to be of the shrewd, genial business type. They pumped me dry and with a nod and a sly wink to his partner, Foxey remarked that I "would do," and he thereupon employed me.

I could not believe my own ears. I could not understand then why they wanted a green young man; there was every probability that I would make more mistakes in one month than it would cost to employ a man of experience. But, I thought, some people are constituted that way, and it is not for me to tell them whom they should employ.

They told me to come the next morning prepared to take the road, and they would give me all necessary instructions before I started. I was on hand bright and early and somewhat dubiously inspected my outfit, which consisted of one of those old square, slick, black valises for my clothing, and another of the same kind filled with the company's cards. My instructions were to keep my pockets well filled with the cards, never to lose an opportunity of presenting one, and to make myself agreeable to everyone upon all occasions. When my supply of pasteboards ran short they would send me more with instructions what town to make next. I asked if they were not going to give me a trunk of samples (as I had noticed drummers displayed their samples, as they called them) But the reply was, "You must become acquainted first, afterward we will

consider trunks and samples, if we think it becomes necessary." So with my two square black valises and a plug hat, with which they had presented me, I accepted and started out on my travels. I considered that I made quite a stunning appearance and I resolved I must not make a failure of this trip or I would never reach the funny spot in the commercial man's life.

You ask, did I find it? Yes! for the other fellow. You see, he laughed easier than I did. I will tell you all about it.

On boarding the train I felt somewhat nervous and knew there would be no enjoyment for me until after I had made a few presentations of my cards and had become, as it were, broken in.

I piled into a seat with my luggage. I had not been there long before the conductor approached with his usual, "Ticket, please." With one hand I presented my ticket and with the other my card. He looked at my card, then at me, smiled, shoved the card in his pocket and walked on. I said to myself, "By Jove! that's easy; that fellow was kind of struck on my appearance." The clever smile he gave me braced me up.



My first start on the road as a commercial traveler.



It was only a short run to the next station where I was to get off and "work the town," as it is called.

Upon alighting from the train the porter got my baggage and me mixed up with the troupe of a vaudeville show and shoved me into a private coach which they had telegraphed ahead for, no doubt taking me for the funny man of the show.

When we arrived at the hotel a lady and gentleman approached me and asked if I were not minister so-and-so. That so nearly paralyzed me that one foot slipped off the curb into the gutter with a sudden jerk. I righted myself as soon as possible and replied that I was not, at the same time presenting each with my card. They looked at me and then at my card, and with a pleasant smile bowed themselves away. I then walked up to the hotel counter and picked up the pen to register. As I did so the clerk said, "Are you not the justice of peace from Coon Hollow?" I replied that I was not, and presented him with my card. He looked at my card, then at me and suddenly got red in the face. I suppose he did not dare laugh.

I tell you they treated me royally in that town. Everybody appeared to enjoy my society. I

presented my card upon every occasion and it was always received with a smile. Even the reporter of the *Boston Despatch* called at the hotel where I stopped, took my picture and gave me a bully write-up. I thought my clothes were getting a little tight for me by this time and I felt I was getting nearer the funny spot in the commercial man's life. I began to imagine my success as a commercial traveler would be of the cyclone order.

As I had remained two days in this place and was now off for the next, which was a city of some importance, I began to wonder if everything would work as smoothly with me there as it had hitherto done and I felt I had left more smiles behind me than frowns.

As the train pulled into the next station I alighted and saw a large number of hotel runners lined up beside a rope which separated them from the crowd, calling out the names of their various hotels.

As I sauntered down the line with my plug hat on the back of my head, carrying my two valises, the uproar that came from those runners who, with outstretched hands, appealed to me for my patronage, led me further to believe that my

appearance was that of an individual of some importance. They were a jolly lot of fellows and appeared to be laughing very heartily at some little occurrence, I knew not what. Their hilarity amused me, however. I walked slowly down the line, making a careful study of each one's face, as from my impression of the runner I would select my hotel. I had scanned them all very carefully till I reached the end of the line, where a man of immense proportions was calling out in a deep barytone voice the name of his house. I said to myself, "If that fellow's house is as substantial as he looks, that's the place I'll hang out." So I gave him my baggage and my card and boarded the bus with the driver. Before I had time to get fairly seated we were surrounded by a mob of hotel runners calling out, "What house are you running for?" I said to myself, "By Jove! this is pretty good; they recognize me as a drummer already," and I began to distribute my cards among them till I had emptied my pockets, when the driver whipped up and we drove off. By the time we had reached the hotel I had refilled my pockets with cards.

The hotel office was a large place and the floor was made of tiles such as I had heard the

drummers tell about, while the walls and ceiling were beautifully frescoed. A string band was playing the latest selections, but the piece which pleased me more than all the rest was "Home Sweet Home."

The landlord of this hotel had a natural, genial way about him which drew one to him; it was not that forced geniality that many people have, so raw that it is perceptible to the most inexperienced. He appeared to enjoy himself in the business he was in, owing to the fact, I presume, that he was gifted with keen perceptive faculties and the everlasting panorama of human characters floating daily before him was one continuous source of amusement.

Well, I suppose I must have played my part in entertaining him, for when he got through with the greetings of the other arrivals he walked across the floor to me with outstretched hands. I drew myself up until my pantaloons got too short for me, and presented him with my card. He looked at it, then at me, and his soft blue eyes twinkled with merriment as he took me by the hand and led me from one group of gentlemen to another, introducing me to all, and to each gentleman as I was presented I followed the

instructions of my house by handing out my pasteboard.

It was not very long before the office was ringing with laughter. "By Jove! they are a jolly lot of fellows," I thought. They said to the landlord that he was one of the finest entertainers that they had met on the road, and I remarked to an old gentleman standing near me (thinking I had to say something) that the string band played beautifully—that last piece was especially well executed, it being a well-known Strauss waltz. He looked at me for a minute with a peculiar smile and a merry twinkle in his eye, and said, "Yes, they played that well; they did it as well as you could."

The look, more than the remark which accompanied it, nettled me, and I replied to him that I did not claim to be a musician of equal talent with the performers; then, as my resentment rose higher and higher at the slur on my right to criticize, I said to him that he should not make a remark of that kind unless he had some ability in the musical line himself. He replied that he had, and that he would wager the drinks for the house that he could beat me playing the violin. I took a look around the house, sizing the thing up, as it

were, and did not think it would amount to very much, as there were not many present at that moment.

I formally accepted his challenge, never dreaming for a moment that by communicating with the clubs and other hotels that there was a musical contest on hand worth seeing the house would be filled to overflowing in a short time. We arranged for a violin. An old gentleman was selected by the crowd to act as judge, and we drew straws to see which should play first. He drew the longest straw and had to begin the performance. We were placed on chairs facing the wall, with the judge between and directly behind us. My opponent struck off at a pretty lively gait, but in my judgment his playing was far below the average of the poorest that I had ever done, and I was so elated that I slapped one hand on my knee, with a wave to the crowd with the other, signifying that I had him.

By this time people had commenced to arrive in large numbers. The hotel lobby was crowded and they were standing on chairs and benches in an uproar of laughter at the apparent defeat of my opponent, as I thought. Just then the judge tapped me on the shoulder to take the violin, as

it was my turn. I had been so taken up with the increasing crowd and their hilarity that I had not thought of the selection which would be most appropriate for the occasion and bring the audience to tears, which was my real object. So I began with a prelude (in order to get accustomed to the violin curve on the finger-board and its tone) before launching out on those beautiful strains I had pictured in my mind. The audience was by this time in an uproar.

The judge at my elbow had been very quiet. I concluded I would turn around and ascertain the cause, when I discovered him with both of his forefingers shoved into his ears up to the first joint. I said in an undertone, "Judge, how am I getting on; don't you think I'll win?" He sprang to his feet and ordered me to stop that excruciating noise at once, as he had fully made up his mind what his decision would be. He had hardly got through when a table on rollers was moved to the center of the room and he was lifted upon it bodily by the crowd and requested to render his judgment from this improvised platform so that he could be heard by all.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I was selected by you to act as judge of this musical contest. My

decision is that they both treat the house for imposing upon this crowd such hideous strains, and calling it music." These words actually took my breath away. Two or three hundred people at ten cents a drink. My mind wandered back to a little village near where I lived and where I had heard the drummers discuss the money charged in their expense account. I wondered to myself how the deuce I would explain to my house thirty dollars' worth of drinks in one night.

Was this one of those funny spots in the commercial man's life I had been looking for? My pantaloons had been too short for me all the evening, but they were long enough now. The glasses were clinking merrily over the bar at my expense and as the vast crowd drank to my health and success, I would step forward with a subdued bow and present each one with my card. I noticed that every individual when receiving it would look first at me and then at the card. Those more bold would laugh outright, while those who were modest and retiring would swell up, get red in the face and smile. I began to understand that there was something wrong somewhere, and meant to ascertain, if possible, what there was about me and that infernal card which caused

such merriment. After the crowd in the lobby had been served with drinks and cigars I was informed by the bartender that I owed him just \$32.20 for the part I had taken in that little musical contest. I paid it, and at the same time I thought of the presentiment I had when starting out on the road that I would in some way receive a shock to my nervous system before I returned. The shock had come with a vengeance, and I said to myself that the next man who offered to bet he could beat me playing on the violin or any other instrument would be immediately and emphatically informed of the fact that there was not a solitary musical chord in my whole anatomy. But how the deuce was I to explain the expenditure of \$32.20 in one night for whisky in my expense account? Foxey would be simply paralyzed, and that meant dismissal and disgrace for me.

By twelve o'clock that night the crowd had pretty well dispersed, and knowing that a number of old experienced drummers had been present and witnessed my defeat, I decided to invite a few of them up to my room to take counsel how best to make out my expense account. They readily consented to help me. We went

upstairs, pulled a table to the center of the room and gathered around it. I was informed by one that my opponent in the musical contest was an old veteran of the road from Louisville, Kentucky, and one of the shrewdest as well as one of the jolliest men who ever drummed the trades.

Finally one suggested, "Charge it up to entertaining the trade." Another replied, "That's an old gag; he has no trade." "Then why not charge it up to incidentals?" Another said, "The incidental business is played out." A third old fellow sitting there apparently half asleep, interposed, "Young man, charge it up to experience."

At this juncture there was a loud rap upon the door, and who should walk in but my opponent in the musical contest. Without even a word of salutation he said, "Youngster, charge it up to painting the town red." That did seem to me the most appropriate suggestion yet made. He then apologized very nicely for intruding, and stated that he had taken the liberty of bringing a few of his friends, whom he knew it would be well for me to meet, and he thereupon bade them enter and introduced me. They proved to be eight or ten of the leading commercial men of the town, and following closely behind them were two

or three waiters with large metal trays loaded down with the finest drinks and cigars.

This broke up the discussion on the expense business, as I did not care to go into it any further under the circumstances, and I did not approve of any of the suggestions the drummers had made.

After spending an hour of hilarity the company left me in my solitude to ponder over the events of the evening.

My room faced the main street; the rattle of milk wagons, drays and buses over the cobblestones, and the clink of glasses at the bar, directly under me, were not sounds of the lullaby order conducive to sleep. The atmosphere of the room smelt like a crowded street car on a rainy day.

I slept but little that night. I somehow felt that I was not through with that mob yet—or rather, that they were not through with me.

I arose early next morning and went down to the lobby of the hotel. I was met by the head bartender, who presented me with a bill of \$10.50 for cigars and drinks ordered for the consulting board which had met in my room the night before. I meekly paid it.

I then sat down and wrote my house all the facts in connection with the trip, stating in my expense account that I had got into a musical contest with a ruffian from Louisville, one who I believed, by the way, was an old knight of the road. By him and through him it cost me (or rather you, if you please) \$42.70 for whisky and cigars in one night. Then a realizing sense of their injustice in sending out an inexperienced boy to cope with men who had spent years in the business overcame me. I spunked up and talked to Mr. Foxey as probably no salesman had ever done before, in conclusion informing him that if my services were not needed any longer he could wire me at once, and I would await his reply at this place.

After I had mailed my letter I concluded to go to my room and ascertain, if possible, the cause my attractiveness. I placed myself in front of the mirror with my head bared; I could not see anything wrong with my appearance. Then suddenly I thought of that infernal card, which I had never even taken the trouble to read, although I had given thousands of them away. I took one from my pocket. It read as follows: "Second-hand goods of all descriptions, and any

old things. For full particulars address Foxey & Co., No.—Street, New York.”

I just took that card, set it on the shelf alongside the glass, donned my plug hat, picked up my two valises and presented myself in front of the mirror so that I could see myself as others had seen me.

It is not necessary to say that I now discovered the reason for the hilarity of everyone whom I met.

I awaited a reply from my house with some foreboding, you may be assured.

In a few days I received it. I took that letter and hid myself away in my room where no mortal eye could see me. Opening it I read:

“Dear Sir:—Your letter duly received. Your expense account is allowed. (At that I sprang to my feet and my pantaloons again became too short for me.) Your salary is raised \$25.00 per month (I swelled up until the buttons almost burst from my vest and I threw my hat to the ceiling). We have heard good reports from you all along the route. We got the paper at your first stop-off wherein they gave you an amusing write-up. We have had numerous inquiries from along your route requesting catalogues and prices,

and we have sold a number of cases of damaged goods, second-hand wagons, buggies, harness, etc., and we send you money and cards by express. Cards are same as last, excepting that we have added new as well as second-hand goods. Take stage to country villages and to Sunnyside and we'll write you more fully at that place."

At this juncture I sprang over the table, grabbed the door-knob, and with a jerk threw the door wide open, jumped astride the stair-rail and slid down into the sitting-room below, landing in a heap with a thud on the floor. Two strangers sitting near where I landed ran to assist me to my feet. As they neared me I thrust my card to each one. They proved to be newspapermen of the city looking for news.

You ask, "Did they get it?" All that I can say is, if they didn't it was not my fault.

I was dubbed at that place "Any Old Thing."

I had to wait two or three days for money and cards at the hotel where I had met my Waterloo in the musical contest, and in the meantime I outlined my route to Sunnyside and other country villages.

The first stop, I was informed, would be at noon of the first day at "Old Laughing Billy Jones'" place.

I noticed in the papers the next morning that those two infernal reporters had published my card with my picture alongside of it, stating that I was to arrive by stage at "Old Laughing Billy Jones'" about noontime, on a certain day, and the meeting of "Old Laughing Billy Jones" and "Any Old Thing" would be interesting, and those near-by should not miss the occasion.

Those papers, of course, were sent broadcast through the country before me, and I began to wonder now if old Foxey & Co. had anything to do with my notoriety. Was it possible that they had been feeing these reporters to make a guy out of me just to advertise their business? "Well," I thought, "they pay me well; let them go it if they like, and I'll see it out and find that funny point in the commercial man's life, if there is one, before I stop."

In two or three days my money and cards arrived, and I boarded the next stage for Sunnyside and other country villages as instructed.

I was informed by the driver that our first stop would be for dinner at "Old Laughing Billy Jones'." I was the only passenger on the stage that day and the driver would have liked to talk my left arm off. I had not slept much since I

started on the road on account of the noises characteristic of city life. As we got well out into the country the air and the gentle rocking of the coach soon lulled me to sleep, and as I dozed off the last I remember of the driver's incessant chatter was that Miss Sally Jones, "Old Laughing Billy's" daughter, had been fooling around a drummer and there was talk of their getting married; but they didn't and there was a row and "Old Laughing Billy" wasn't stuck on drummers any more.

I was dead to the world in sleep for how long I don't know. I can't tell you anything about the country I passed through here, for I didn't see it. All of a sudden I was awakened by the cling-clang-cling-clang of a bell. I looked out of the stage and saw that we had arrived at "Old Laughing Billy Jones'" country inn.

The proprietor was sitting on a bench upon the porch pulling on a bale rope attached to a bell fastened on the top of a tall pole. Beside him lay a gaunt, hungry-looking hog basking in the sunshine and a dog standing in the doorway appeared as though he longed for someone's cow to die with a hollow horn.



"Old Laughing Billy Jones' " place.



As I alighted from the stage with my plug hat on the back of my head and the two valises which played such an important part in my make-up, "Laughing Billy" just turned loose with a whirlwind of "Haw! haw! haw! haw! haw!" then caught his breath in a different key—"Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!" and when he had run down he called to his wife, "Mother, come here, it's come!"

The old lady, hearing the uproar, ran to the door, and as she did so she inquired, "What's come?" Billy Jones replied, "Any Old Thing, Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" At that moment an old billy-goat made his appearance around the corner of the house, through a half-tumbled-down garden gate, and began at once to make free with me and my baggage, rearing up on his hind feet and coming sidewise, with his chin and his whiskers tucked slightly under. I realized something had to be done at once, as "Old Laughing Billy" and the crowd which had gathered at the inn were convulsed with laughter. I did not have any nails or old tin cans to give that infernal goat so I just shoved *one of my cards into his face*. He took it and scampered away. As he did so a gentle smile rippled over his mouth and whiskers.

When the goat had got through greeting me and "Old Laughing Billy" had subsided, I had an opportunity to notice that extraordinary man. He was a tall, lean, lank individual, with a few long, stiff, straggling hairs on his slick bald head, and with such a mischievous looking eye that it was no wonder they called him "Laughing Billy Jones."

Mrs. Jones soon informed us that dinner was ready. There were about ten or twelve persons seated around the table. The one who interested me most was a worldly looking man past middle age, and I made up my mind when dinner was over I'd find out who he was if he did not die before I got the opportunity of making his acquaintance; and this is no jest either, for he was devoting himself most assiduously to a large platter of sickly looking green cucumbers which had been placed before him.

"Old Laughing Billy" proceeded to tell us about his short crop this year. He did not have the time to attend to it as he should, he was so fully occupied in managing the hotel and entertaining his guests. As he said this he looked over toward me and let go another "Haw! haw! haw! haw! haw!" Just then a hog walked

through the dining-room where we were eating. "Old Billy" said, "Mother, drive the hog out."

Then the man in whom I had become so interested arose and left the table; it was quite evident that the simple manners of the country people did not comport with his city-bred ideas. I feared he might get away without my finding out who he was, so I followed him.

On entering the sitting-room I thought, "Now I'll present him with my card, and if he has a card, that will make him show his hand." I walked up to him and handed him my omnipresent credential, and he accepted it with a polite bow, at the same time drawing forth his own from a neat case. Upon it was printed, "*Boston Despatch*." I've forgotten his name, but I could not help wishing that the pestiferous goat had butted that reporter to death before I arrived.

However, he was very pleasant, and as we walked out upon the porch in front of the house he complained of not feeling well. I suggested it might be the green cucumbers he ate that made him sick. He replied, with an insinuating look, that "he never could resist the temptation of taking in everything green that he came across." I retorted, "Do you always find it the best thing to do?"

The driver had now changed horses, and being impatient to start, shouted out, "All aboard for Sunnyside!" As we rolled away I noticed the poverty-stricken appearance of the place—the corn was about waist-high, and had a pale, sickly look; the wheat and oats were short in straw and head; and the fences around "Old Billy's" neighborhood were generally in a dilapidated condition. It looked as though they did more farming around "Old Jones'" and the blacksmith-shop, store and post-office, whittling on boxes and fences, than they did in the fields.

"Old Billy" and his troubles soon passed from our view, and as we drove over the brow of the hill a beautiful landscape of rolling country lay before us. Here and there were streams of clear running water, the banks of which were fringed with timber.

Meadows of timothy hay, wheat, oats and corn alternating with their different hues, in the midst of which could sometimes be seen a good substantial old brick house, with broad porches, standing back from the road, surrounded by fruits and vines of every variety made a scene most pleasing to the eye. As we passed the suburban homes nearing Sunnyside the air came

to us permeated with sweet odors from the fast ripening fruit upon the trees and from the flowers in the gardens. Strains of music, frequently accompanied by voices, floated out to us at intervals upon the still evening air. The cows were sauntering leisurely from the pastures, with an occasional low to notify their masters of their home-coming and the faithful old watchdog greeted us now and then with a friendly bark.

On arriving at Sunnyside we found it to be a beautiful little town lying along the banks of a river.

After supper the reporter and myself took a stroll through the village. The air was soft and balmy and the young ladies were walking arm in arm with their sweethearts, while the stars in the dark blue sky above winked at their love-making. This made me lonesome and homesick. We noticed that everybody appeared to be going in the same direction, which plainly indicated a gathering of some kind; so we allowed ourselves to be led by the crowd. The stream of humanity at last turned into a broad walk, both sides of which were lined with walnut and locust trees. This led us to a little old-fashioned church, set well back from the road. We walked in and took our seats.

I remember during the sermon the minister remarked that "Some people had a head on their shoulders, while others had only a knot on the end of the spinal column." At this that infernal reporter looked at me and smiled. When the sermon was over they passed around the missionary box, which appeared to be their usual custom. As it was presented to an old gentleman of rather pleasing appearance sitting in front of us, I noticed that he contributed two pieces of money and as they jingled into the box it reminded me of a story I once heard of a man whose contribution was always in a dual form. Some uncharitable people said it was done so that others might hear the money rattle. Finally the usher whose business it was to attend to that particular aisle, becoming curious, one day after service proceeded to pump him. "Doctor," he said, "I have noticed that upon a number of occasions you have contributed to the missionary cause a dollar and a ten-cent piece; now, Doctor, this must have some significance and we wish to know its meaning." The doctor replied, "Every individual has his own peculiar idea of things and this is one of mine." But the usher was not going to let him off so easily and said,

"That explanation is not satisfactory," insisting upon knowing the reason. The doctor replied, "I contribute the ten-cent piece to the missionary cause and the dollar to defray its expenses."

The reporter, when I told him this, remarked, "That's a good one; next time I get sick I'll send for that old fellow." "Do you think that will be before I leave this town?" I asked.

I remained in Sunnyside for several days and made some very pleasant acquaintances. It seemed to me more like the pleasurable spot in the commercial man's life than any place I had hitherto seen.

I received a letter while here from old Foxey & Co., telling me to come back to New York without delay. When I read it I said to myself, "Guess there is something wrong with my expense account." Opportunity not having presented itself to allow of my distributing many of my company's cards, and as I was to leave the next morning over a different route from that which I had come, I decided to avail myself of the chance of playing a practical joke upon the reporter, so I wrote on two or three hundred of the cards, "Represented by the *Boston Despatch*," and just before daylight I went and threw these cards into all the yards

and doorways of business houses in the town. I left on the next stage for New York City, but with a heavy heart.

I disliked to leave the soft, balmy air of the country, where freedom and happiness reigned and where for several days I had heard the familiar sounds which had once tired me, but which now became inexpressibly dear to me again. What a contrast between the life here and that of the city, with its little stuffy hotel rooms, where the rattle of milk wagons, drays and buses would be mingled with one's dreams, and the foul odors of the sewers would float into one's window on the still night air! It was the reverse of the funny spot in the commercial man's life.

Father had sold his farm since I had left, and I could not now retrace my steps and go back to the old place, as I should certainly have done had it been possible.

On arriving in New York City I immediately made my way to the store of Foxey & Co. I was called into the private office, and somehow I felt there was trouble in store for me, for the same two men who had nodded and winked to each other that I "would do," appeared grave and stern, and I wondered if those reporters had had

anything to do with it. Then I thought of the cards I had cast abroad in the little town of Sunnyside, and straightway jumped to the conclusion that the *Boston Despatch* man was at the bottom of my troubles. Still, I thought, most reporters are a good jolly lot of fellows and he has no reason to do me harm. It is only now and then that you find one who is soured on the cob and strikes in all directions like a blind rattler in dog days.

However, I was soon relieved of my anxiety, for they told me they were well pleased with my trip, and the numerous inquiries they had received from along my route had led them to place in my hands a deal of great importance to them, a deal of thousands of dollars. They gave me the name of a gentleman and the hotel at which he was stopping and told me to call upon him at once. I replied that I did not think I could meet with their expectations. "Call upon him at once," was their reply.

I called at the hotel, as I had been requested, sought out the gentleman and presented my card.

He looked at the card, then at me, smiled, and asked me to be seated.

He was a short, thick-set man, with a pleasing face and manners. I soon ascertained that he

was not only at the head of a large manufacturing plant in one of Ohio's busiest cities, but was a United States senator as well, so hereafter I will call him the Senator.

After I was seated he looked at my card again and smiled. I thought, "I'm darned glad I have not got those two square black valises with me." "Well," he said, kind of chuckling to himself, "What have you got to sell?" I thought, "What in the deuce will I say?" I did not want to make a break before a United States senator, but to save my life I could not think of a thing we had to sell. He still chuckled and said, "What did you say that you had to sell?" Before I thought I replied, "Any old thing." "What's the price?" he inquired. At that I was almost bewildered, when a messenger boy marched in and coming straight up to me handed me a message from Foxey & Co. It read:

"We have just purchased a bankrupt stock of railroad iron supplies, steel boiler plates, etc. We have an almost unlimited quantity of this stock and should you find a buyer will make figures for you that will interest him. The quantity that we supply will cut some figure in the price."

I read the despatch and passed it to the Senator. He looked it over, appeared to study its contents closely and then handed it back. At that moment a tall, handsome, dark-eyed man walked in, approached the Senator and said, "Well, Senator, I have arranged to entertain you this evening."

The Senator bowed and introduced me to a Mr. Marshall of Chicago, and I soon ascertained that he was in the same business as myself. Fearing that the new arrival would get the Senator away from me I ventured to say, "Senator, I was just about to ask you to accompany me to the theater this evening when Mr. Marshall appeared."

With a sly wink at the Senator, Marshall replied, "You join us; we will be glad to have you. It won't cost you a cent." At this juncture a gentleman of medium size, of the blonde type, with sea-blue eyes, and somewhat effeminate in his manner, walked up and shook hands with the Senator and Marshall, and from their conversation I discovered that his mission was also the same as Marshall's and my own. He was introduced to me as Mr. Meyers of New York. The brisk Chicago man seemed to have

constituted himself the host of the evening, and he promptly extended an invitation to Meyers to consider himself a member of our party.

The messenger who had brought the note from Foxey still lingered around as though he had received instructions from the firm to make himself useful, so I excused myself for a few moments and wrote back as follows:

“Foxey & Co., Dear Sirs:—Mr. Marshall of Chicago is with the Senator, also a Mr. Meyers of this city, both upon the same mission as myself, and both old-timers on the road. Send up your best and most ready entertainer if you expect the results to benefit you.

“This mission you have sent me on has the flavor of another musical contest or something similar, and its magnitude I cannot even venture to guess.”

The reply came promptly: “Dear Sir:—We know of no one who has found fault with you as an entertainer. (My hat fell off.) We send you by messenger one thousand dollars to use in the contest for that man’s trade. More in waiting if you need it.—Foxey & Co.”

I sprang to my feet and said, “By Jove! old Foxey is blooded, and I’ll make that deal if I get

into jail for my expense account. I guess the boss has been on the road himself, but how in the deuce am I to spend the money to help the matter along?" For we were all Marshall's guests, and the Senator was not a man to be trifled with.

The more I thought of the thing the more bewildering it became. One thousand dollars in crisp new greenbacks, and a contest of wits to be fought out that would baffle the most experienced! I could not understand either, why Marshall had been so ready with his invitation to me; however, I concluded to accept the situation philosophically; probably they were taking me along to have some fun with me, and while they were doing that old Foxey undoubtedly thought I might find out something to his advantage.

The afternoon was wearing away and I wanted to be alone to think out my plans. So, after promising to meet the party about half past seven, I excused myself and went to my room in a decidedly dejected frame of mind.

A few familiar trinkets which I had brought from the old farm were upon the center-table, and in my aimless ramblings around the room I mechanically picked up from among the lot a

whistle made from a hazel bush, in the manufacture of which, as a boy, I had taken special pride. I blew it and it had the same vibrant tone which I had been so proud of the day I made it down by the creek with the boys. Just then a loud rap came on the door. I called, "Come in." A keen wiry-looking man appeared before me and introduced himself as the head of the detective bureau. I asked him what in the deuce he wanted with me. Without one word of reply he handed me this message:

"Should you need assistance in your contest for trade, which we realize will probably be one of some magnitude, we recommend the bearer of this note and his associates.

"Foxy & Co."

I asked him to be seated. How could I make use of detectives? Then I thought of my whistle, and associated detectives and whistle together. I said, "Captain, I have a matter of great importance intrusted to me." I then explained to him the nature of the case, the experienced men with whom I had to deal, and that I was a green boy from the country. I told him I had been invited to be the guest of these gentlemen for the evening, but that I wished it to be so arranged that

they should pay nothing except where it was to my interest for them to do so; that I desired him to take a sufficient force of men and shadow our every move; that when he heard the whistle there should be no money received from those who had invited me out. Should the whistle not be blown, then those who gave the order must foot the bill. He would have to change his men alternately so they would not be discovered when following us.

The captain replied that he understood, and that he could carry out the programme with perfect ease; that his men would anticipate our every move, and would appear as hack-drivers, waiters, policemen, theater clerks and social business men, so that I could communicate with them when necessary. I told him to be on hand at a certain hotel at 7:30 sharp, supplied him with the money necessary and arranged a code of signals.

I returned to the hotel at the appointed time, and found my friends and a carriage in waiting. The programme was a drive through the park and a box in a Broadway theater.

We soon took our seats in the carriage and were off down through the Bowery. As we passed one of those numerous places characteristic of that thoroughfare, I heard a childish voice

pleading in piteous tones with someone, for what, I could not tell. I threw the carriage door open, and springing out made my way to a low saloon from whence the sound proceeded.

The pathos of the scene cannot be described. A tough looking man stood behind the bar; another, whose once pleasing features were now distorted with drink, was leaning against the counter, in one hand clutching a few pieces of paper money of small denomination. The bar-keeper was urging him to release his grasp upon it. Beside the wretch who held the money was a little flaxen-haired girl, with her long unkempt hair hanging down her back, her dress in tatters and shreds, her feet and limbs bare, and her sweet face and soft musical voice pleading with her father not to spend his last cent for drink. It was most touching as she clung to his hand, entreating the man behind the bar not to take the last cent from her father; as her mother was sick and had earned that money with her needle. She said her father was so good and kind when he was sober. The man behind the bar made another effort to release the drunken man's grasp upon the money. "Oh! please, Mr. Barkeeper," the little child cried, "don't take the money, we are starving!"

My blood was fast reaching the boiling pitch, but I was perfectly helpless to aid the child, as I thought. The room contained a number of men, who, I felt convinced, would not tolerate any interference with what they considered a legitimate business. I must have looked the indignation I felt, for a big man, clad in a long ulster, and himself a seeming devotee of Bacchus, unsteadily approached me. He managed to lurch heavily against me and I turned away in disgust; but while doing so, amid his profuse and drunken apologies, I caught a whisper that electrified me. He said, "Blow your whistle." My whistle! I had forgotten all about it in the excitement of the moment. I drew it forth and blew it. The effect was something unexpected. The big man instantly sobered up, and stepping up to the bar picked up the child as though she were a feather, and leading the father away said, "We'll take 'em home, away from this den of vice."

You ask me why I blew my whistle? Were not the police there? No, they were not. Why should they be? Did not the power of a great city give the pirate license to sell his poison on that street at that number? Had not the little girl a right to plead with her drunken father not

to spend the money earned by her sick mother? There is a higher law than that made by man which we are sometimes compelled to obey, and I took the chance of interfering with a business which the officials of a great city had licensed to rob weak men and women of their faculties and money.

I reentered the carriage and we proceeded on our way toward the park. The Senator was quick and observing; his long experience of the world had taught him to read invisible handwriting on the walls, and he showed by his actions that he believed I had something to do with the dash of that stalwart man to the little girl's rescue. But he said nothing. He was most kind and considerate toward me, however, and several times, when he thought I was not observing him, I caught his eye upon me while a perplexed expression crossed his countenance. He knew I was a green country fellow and a stranger to city ways. He was sure of that, or he might have guessed my secret.

We made two or three halts on the way for refreshments, but I thought it best at these places to allow the whistle to remain silent. On our return from the park we stopped for dinner. I blew my whistle.

The cashier, with a courteous bow, told Mr. Marshall there was no charge. The expression upon that fellow's jovial face brought forth a peal of laughter from the Senator and Meyers. Marshall said nothing but looked as though he was thinking about something. We walked out, took the carriage to the theater and on arriving there I got off to one side and blew the whistle. Marshall approached the driver and asked him what the bill was. "No charge," the driver replied.

Mr. Marshall turned to us all, and with something which sounded very like profanity said, "My friends are trying to play a practical joke upon me, but whoever it is it won't last long. I'll tire them out."

He walked up to the box-office in the theater and called for the most expensive box in the house. Just ahead of him, however, another man was purchasing a ticket. He seemed to have some trouble in making his selection; at any rate, he thrust his long body half way into the window and appeared to be on the best of terms with the ticket man. Immediately after him came Marshall. He laid the money down. A little trill on the whistle—his money was shoved back. He was told it was no good.

"What!" he exclaimed, savagely, "do you mean to say I'm a counterfeiter?" "Oh, no!" the clerk replied, "there is no charge." The Senator and Meyers almost went into spasms as the bewildered Marshall pocketed the tickets and his money, and we all went into the theater.

But Marshall was uneasy; something was troubling him, and presently he suggested that as the play was dry we should go to the Casino Theater, where we could sit in the garden among the palms and look down on the stage, and have refreshments, if we so desired.

As we were his guests, we all readily consented. We took a hack and soon arrived at the door of the Casino, and as we alighted Marshall passed the driver a piece of money. The whistle was silent. Marshall looked around surprised, then he walked to the theater box-office and ordered four tickets. I blew the whistle. His money was returned with the announcement that there was no charge. I kept that fellow so busy with his accounts with that whistle of mine that he did not have much time to talk to the Senator on business. I knew the Senator intended to leave the next morning on the four A. M. train. If I could

just manage to keep this man Marshall from discovering my little racket I thought I'd be all right.

We took seats around a table and Marshall ordered wines and cigars. By this time, however, he had made up his mind that either Meyers or myself was the instigator of the mischief and he watched us so closely that I had no opportunity to even get at the whistle, not to mention blowing it. A large painting hung on the wall at a slight distance from us. I excused myself and went to inspect it and while so engaged blew the signal. But as I turned around to rejoin my friends there stood the Senator at my very elbow. He had seen the little maneuver.

I smiled and put the whistle in my pocket and we were soon reseated at the table. When Marshall offered to pay, his money was refused. He tried to tip the waiters; they smiled, shook their heads and walked away.

Then Marshall waxed wroth and accused Mr. Meyers of putting up some joke on him. Mr. Meyers was a man who enjoyed a joke when played upon anybody else, but could not take one himself; some hot words passed between them in reference to it.

I sat there like a good boy in Sunday-school, and the Senator whispered to me that he would give me five dollars for the whistle. I imagined he felt sorry for Mr. Marshall, and thought if he could get the whistle the thing would stop.

I replied the whistle was one I had made when a boy and there was a charm about it, and I could not think of disposing of it.

They soon tired of the Casino and the Senator proposed to take a drive down to the famous Hoffman saloon.

On alighting from the hack at the saloon the Senator begged me to let him blow it. He did so just as Mr. Marshall was in the act of handing the driver his money. The reply was, "No charge."

While Mr. Marshall was chagrined the Senator and Mr. Meyers were convulsed with laughter. I, of course, kept quiet. I thought this really appeared to be one of the funny spots in the commercial man's life.

The Senator was the only one of the three who had discovered the existence of the whistle, but I knew by his actions that he was sorely puzzled how the signal was so instantly understood and implicitly obeyed.

As we entered the saloon Mr. Marshall said that he knew half of the people in that saloon, and as some of his friends were trying to play a practical joke upon him he would make it expensive for them before he stopped.

At that the Senator passed the whistle back to me.

The place was furnished with the utmost elegance; great mirrors lined the walls from floor to ceiling. I came very near walking through one, thinking it was an opening into another room.

My bumping against the mirror brought forth peals of laughter from the crowd, and Mr. Marshall asked the Senator where he got me. The Senator anxiously inquired whether I had broken anything. I soon saw that both Marshall and Meyers were favorite clubmen, and the former told his friends that some one that evening had tried to play a practical joke upon him. Meyers quickly retorted, "They hadn't tried—they simply did."

This remark nettled Marshall again, and he told Meyers he'd get even with him for the part he had taken in it. Marshall believed that Meyers was responsible for the whole thing.

That was too much for me. I chuckled and the Senator gave me a sly wink.

Neither Meyers nor Marshall had seen my card; they knew nothing of my mission with the Senator, although they knew the Senator was in some way interested in me, and it annoyed them because they could not fathom its meaning.

Had they seen the message I had shown the Senator at the hotel from Foxey & Co. before their arrival they probably would not have asked me to be their guest.

Marshall, in his generous, off-hand way, invited all present to have refreshments with him, at the same time watching every movement that Meyers made.

The crowd, however, had not forgotten what they thought was a drummer's fish story about some one paying all of Marshall's bills that evening, and the outcome of this treat was anxiously watched.

When all had been served Marshall laid a roll of bills upon the counter and the cashier told him with a polite bow there would be no charge. That gave his friends an opportunity of having a little fun at his expense.

I wondered to myself if this was one of the funny spots in a drummer's life for Marshall and Meyers.

It was now twelve o'clock and the Senator excused himself, saying he would be compelled to retire, as he had to take the four A. M. train for home, and he thanked Marshall for the pleasant evening he had enjoyed.

The veiled sarcasm of the Senator's courteously expressed gratitude made Marshall wince; I giggled. Then the guest of the evening turned to me, shook hands most cordially and said he hoped to see me soon again. (I said to myself, "If you don't I'm liable to go to jail for this night's racket.") Marshall was allowed to secure the hack to take the Senator home. As the Senator had now gone and suspicion lay upon Mr. Meyers, the whistle remained silent.

We all left soon after for our hotels, and I did not go down to Foxey & Co.'s for two or three days. In the meantime I discovered that Meyers had left New York City for the Senator's Ohio town where his immense manufacturing plant was located. That piece of news I thought meant my doom upon that deal.

I went down to see Foxey at once and resolved to make a clean breast of the whole affair, and to tell them plainly that I had on their behalf painted the town red, and was almost out of paint.

I entered the office with a subdued look and a heavy heart. Their greeting was all that could be desired, and just as I was about to tell them of my defeat they handed me a letter which they had received that very day. It was from the Senator, with a list of his wants enclosed, requesting prices, and with instructions to send the answer down at once by "Any Old Thing."

"The letter is very satisfactory—very, indeed," Mr. Foxey said, complaisantly rubbing his hands together. "There is only one point about it which will admit of explanation, and that is, what can the gentleman mean by the extraordinary expression, 'Any Old Thing?'"

I blurted out, "Why, your infernal card gave me that name wherever I went." "Well, Any Old Thing, take the train at once, and don't you come back until you get that order." "But," I protested, "couldn't you send some of your other 'Any Old Things' to finish up that job?" He replied, "That card was gotten up for your special



The picture of Meyers that Marshall signed my name to.



benefit." For a few minutes I felt as though I wanted to kill somebody, but I didn't.

After making a few arrangements I boarded the train and arrived at the Senator's office about ten A. M. next morning. As I walked in who should I meet but Mr. Meyers with the Senator.

My competitor was in a dejected frame of mind and would not speak to me. Evidently something had happened; the Senator was leaning back in his chair and laughing heartily.

I did not know what to think of this odd reception until my eye happened to rest on a pen drawing hanging above the desk. It was the representation of a hack being drawn through one of New York's toughest streets. An individual in the last stages of intoxication was leaning out of the carriage. His clothes were in disorder, his head was bandaged, but the features which were visible bore a most striking resemblance to my friend Meyers, and on the bottom of the picture was written:

"This is the way Meyers looked the next morning when we sent him home in a cab," and my name was signed to it in big bold letters.

I tried to explain that I did not do it, but that only increased the Senator's hilarity and Mr.

Meyers' indignation, and I was holding forth eloquently in my own defense, when I was interrupted by a gentle tap on the office door and in walked Mr. Marshall with one arm in a sling, one eye bandaged, and numerous patches of court-plaster adorning his face and head.

The Senator gave him a quizzical look, and then glanced significantly at the picture on the wall, while Marshall graphically narrated the story of a dreadful train wreck which he had just experienced. We were all prompt with our condolences, but no accounts of that smash-up ever appeared in the papers.

I made up my mind that this versatile drummer had executed that bit of artistic work, as I had overheard a remark passed by one of the guests at the Hoffman House that Mr. Marshall made beautiful pen sketches; but I was unable to convince anybody of the fact, and the charge of cartooning Mr. Meyers on a drunk rested upon me.

The Senator said that he had received the drawing by mail about an hour previous to Meyers' arrival.

It was now nearing the hour of noon and the Senator invited us to lunch with him at his club-rooms.

He informed Marshall that he was a pretty hard looking case, but he'd tell them at the club that he was all right and would pass.

When we were seated in a private apartment the Senator threw out some insinuations about my whistle, and wanted to know if it would work as well here as it did in New York.

Mr. Meyers and Marshall looked at each other. This was the first they had heard of the whistle. I avoided making any reply and went straight at the Senator about the goods in question, finally presenting my figures sealed up. The others, perceiving that it was necessary for them to act, followed suit.

The Senator scanned the prices carefully and then said that while I was a few dollars lower yet he did not feel justified in giving me the order, because he had been buying goods of Meyers and Marshall for a long time and had always found them satisfactory in their dealings.

This was discouraging enough, and my opponents were correspondingly elated and were not slow in showing it; but I still had a trump card left and I resolved to play it. I excused myself for a moment and when I returned said, "Well, Senator, if I don't get the order I can have the

picture, can't I?" "I don't know about that; I had intended to preserve it as a very choice specimen of art," he replied. "But," I persisted, "suppose I can, without getting up from this table, hand you that picture here, in this room, inside of thirty ninutes, will you give it to me then?" The Senator looked me over thoroughly, then glanced under the table and around the room as though he thought I might have had the thing hidden somewhere about me. But no, the picture was evidently where he had left it hanging in his office. It could not by any possibility have been purloined. Having made up his mind on this point he leaned over toward me, and speaking very deliberately and tapping the table with his pencil between every word as if to give emphasis to it, he said, "Young man, if you can deliver me that picture here in this room within thirty minutes, without leaving the table or holding verbal or written discourse with anyone on the subject, you shall have not only the picture, but the order as well."

Eureka! I almost fell out of my chair in my excitement, but I managed to draw forth the whistle and give a very mild toot, knowing well that it would carry the short distance I wished.

Marshall muttered something about "that—— whistle again," but the Senator merely looked at his watch and remarked that I had probably forgotten that we were not in New York, and that many things which might be accomplished there were impossible in a smaller city.

"You are disposed to hedge, are you, Senator?" I asked. "Not at all—not at all," was the reply. "You fulfill your part of the agreement and I certainly shall mine."

The conversation turned to other matters and we proceeded with the meal. Twenty minutes dragged along—I own I thought it was an hour—when the Senator drew out his watch again and looked at it while an incredulous smile lit up his face. Silence fell on the group.

After a moment someone said (I think it was Marshall), "It'll have to get here pretty quick if you are going to win." The words were hardly out of his mouth when the head waiter appeared, closely followed by a tall well-dressed man. The latter with great deliberation apologized for his intrusion and then asked which of the distinguished company before him responded to the name of Mr. Harvey Argyle. Almost bursting with impatience I gasped out that I was that

individual. "In that event," he responded, speaking slowly and in somewhat drawling accents, "I am commissioned to give you this package," and with a low bow he withdrew.

I seized the precious parcel, tore off the wrappings and there, sure enough, was the picture. If ever there was a dazed man it was the Senator. However he was as good as his word and signed the bid at once. And if ever there were two angry men they were Meyers and Marshall; but they presently got over it and demanded to be told how it was done. I was just on the point of enlightening them when a loud voice, in unmistakably Hibernian accents, demanding to see the "Guv'nor," attracted our attention, and a moment after a highly excited individual who proved to be the Senator's special attendant at his office, was ushered in. He was hatless and coatless and likewise breathless from a long run, but with much gasping and panting he managed to get out his story. It was about as follows:

"Guv'nor, I wuz eatin' me dinner—me an' Flaherty—when I heard a racket down the strate, an' before you could say 'Patsy Bolliver,' a team drew on to the sidewalk like mad, an' four

ruffians jumped out an' wan stood at the horses' hids, an' thray cum into the offus, an' two sat on me an' Flaherty—on the hids of us, moind ye—an' held us down; an' the other felly just took an' ransacked the whole place. I think you're robbed, sor, but all we can find gone is that picture a hangin' over the disk."

The Senator drew a long breath. "So that's how it happened. Bless me! And I took you for a green country boy!"

Then Mr. Marshall and Mr. Meyers congratulated me upon my success.

I telegraphed Foxey & Co. that I had secured the order, and would arrive home the following day.

We took the train that evening for New York City, and I entered the office of Foxey & Co. about 2:30 on the following day. I showed them the order signed for \$107,000. The two old men embraced each other and danced around the room in a gleeful, boyish way. In the midst of their hilarity two familiar figures stepped into the office and joined them in the dance. On looking at them closely I discovered one was the man whom I had called the ruffian from Louisville, Kentucky, the hero of the musical contest;

the other was the reporter for the *Boston Despatch* whom I had left at Sunnyside.

In the height of the dance I got excited and thought of the times that I had called for country dances, and I yelled, "Honors to your partner and balance all!" They began to do some double shuffle on the corners, and I called out, "First gent to the right!" but instead they sashayed and did some high kicking. When they recovered from their joyous mood they informed me that they had been friends from boyhood and old "knights of the road" together. This accounted for their interest in me.

Well, I've been off the road for several years, but I see that the boys are still figuring upon their expense accounts and how they will manage to get the trade at the next town.

A HORSE-RACE FOR A WIFE IN THE DAYS OF SLAVERY

The fastest horse does not always win in a race where there is money at stake, but when the hand of a beautiful woman is the prize and men are in deadly earnest as to the result, that is different.

Away down in the blue hills of old Virginia, nestling among the woods which lined the country road, and separated by a distance of several miles, three Southern mansions stood.

The Parks, Strongs and Sharps, who occupied respectively the three places, had long been recognized as among the first families of the State.

Dotted here and there on the plantations were the usual negro quarters, and many of the old plantation melodies sung by the darkies living there are still pleasant memories.

I remember one little darkey more particularly than the others, and I will tell you all about him.

He was a frail coal-black little nigger, slightly deformed, who went by the name of Hunch—in fact he never knew any other. He had a sweet, pathetic voice and was the acknowledged leader in the plantation songs and a great favorite with all the darkies as well as with many of the whites, and especially so with his young master, Charley Sharp.

He did little chores around the house and barns, but was scarcely strong enough for the heavier work of the fields. All the old plantations had large stables well filled with the finest and fastest horses obtainable, as it was the custom in those days to have races at the County and State Fairs for purses of no small amount, for single-mile dashes, the two best in three to win. The love of the sport was universal and genuine, and each vied with his neighbor in owning and rearing the finest and swiftest strains.

One of the old planters had a beautiful daughter; the other two each had a son. These three had grown up together to womanhood and manhood just under the lea of those grand old Virginia mountains.

Helen Strong was the belle of the region, and her hand was sought in marriage by many of the eligible young men in the neighborhood. But to all, excepting Charley Sharp and Allen Parks, the two planters' sons, she turned a deaf ear.

Between these it was a difficult matter to decide; she admired them both. She longed for some solution of the matter without being responsible for the decision; she knew that great rivalry and jealousy existed between them for they avoided meeting each other at her home. Finally, one night there was a chance encounter out on the road and the two young men then and there decided to settle their differences by fighting a duel.

In some unaccountable way Helen heard of this, and she knew the time had arrived when her choice must be quickly made or the odium of the unhappy affair would rest upon her.

She thought Allen Parks was the brighter and more interesting of the two. He was tall and handsome, with a somewhat haughty mien, and he made a finer appearance in society than Charley Sharp. Then her thoughts dwelt on Charley's quiet manners, kindly face and loving, tender eyes. She knew he was the better liked



by every one. But Allen Parks' showy manners had their attractions, nevertheless, and between these two fires the conscientious girl became almost distracted; she did not know what to do. In desperation she wrote each one a note, saying that she would never marry a man whose hands were stained with a drop of human blood shed in such a cause, but that she would marry the one who owned the horse which should win the race at the next Fall State Fair. In her simplicity she never dreamed for one moment that the matter would become public.

The offer proved agreeable to Allen Parks—the most aggressive lover of the two—for he believed, and it was generally conceded, that he had the fastest horse in the country.

Helen was aware of this, but thought that perhaps was an easier way for her to do than to pain either by a direct refusal—from which it may be gathered that the young lady was as yet mistress of her own affections.

At first she wanted Allen Parks to win; but when he held her promise in writing to marry the one who should be successful in the race, he felt so sure of her that his natural arrogance began to assert itself, and among other things he demanded

that she should not receive Charley Sharp's attentions. She coolly replied to him, "When you have won the race I will grant your request, not before."

"I shall win," he responded, "and then you will pay for your insult to me, Mademoiselle!"

This was too much for Helen, and a spirit of resentment rose high within her. "What right had he to speak so?" she asked herself over and over. Then her thoughts wandered, in spite of herself, to Charley Sharp. Might it not be possible for his horse to be trained to win the race? Would she be glad if it should win? Something whispered, "Yes! a thousand times his, rather than the other's!" As the days wore on and she realized the difference between the two men she became excited and nervous. She began to understand the mistake she had made.

There was no one in whom she could confide, and as the time drew nearer she seemed to be so consumed with anxiety that one evening when Charley Sharp called he took her by the hand and said, "Helen, I have been watching you lately, and you do not seem to be like yourself. Are you worrying over the matter?" Helen's color came and went, but she managed to say,

"No, Charley." She could not tell him, of all men; but his kind consideration, and perhaps something else showing in his honest eyes, only made her the more anxious for him to win.

Both suitors had training-tracks upon their plantations. It was now Mid-Summer and the training of their horses began in earnest, as the race was to take place in the Fall.

Allen Parks' horse, "Starlight," was tall, high-headed, nervous and mettlesome, and generally thought to be the fastest horse in the State.

Charley Sharp's horse, "Mobile," was considered the most beautiful horse in all that section.

Both men had engaged expert white trainers in the hope of getting more speed out of their animals than ever before.

Little Hunch had heard of the race and of the prize that was to go to the winner, and when he saw the "white trash," as he called the trainer, come along to ride Mobile he felt almost broken-hearted, for he dearly loved his young master and had always ridden his races. Sometimes he won and sometimes he lost. He was as sharp as a tack and he said to himself, "Marse Sharp 'fraid to risk me, but I'll jes' show 'im an' dat white trash dah ain't no flies on dis nigger,

an' I'll win dis race, 'fo' Gord I will! Marse Charley lubs Missy Helen, an' I'll show white trash what dis nigger can do!"

He was a faithful little darkey and he felt grieved to have his master turn him down in the most important race of his life.

Some years prior to the events we have been narrating old planter Sharp had attended a horse sale. He had the misfortune, as he at that time thought, of having knocked down to him a homely looking colt. He just bid on the colt to help a friend out, never dreaming for a moment that he would get it, especially at such a low figure. But he did, and he never liked the colt because he was compelled to take him, and so he put him in the plow younger than was his usual custom with horses of his own raising. When the new acquisition was first brought to the plantation little Hunch took charge of him; it appeared to be a case of love at first sight between the darkey and the colt. Hunch named him "Little Ben," and he would steal and lie for the colt while, as far as other things were concerned, he was generally honest and truthful. He would take the cleanest straw for his bedding and the best hay and grain to feed him.

Little Ben was a quiet, intelligent colt dark bay in color, with large, sad looking eyes set wide apart in his broad forehead, long bodied, with legs flat and strong and straight as a tightly drawn line, and with well formed hips and shoulders to match. His head was large, neck short and thick, but what he lacked in beauty he fully made up in intelligence. All Hunch's spare time was spent with his pet colt.

Many a time he was heard holding a one-sided conversation with Little Ben out in the stable. They had been together so much that the colt appeared to understand him. He was often seen fishing out of his ragged pants' pockets with his black monkey-like hands dirty crusts of bread, or an apple, which he gave to the little horse; and many a time when his master was not around he would steal out to the training-track and put his pet through his paces.

When the horse was about four years old the old master ordered him to be put in the plow. This nearly broke the poor little darkey's heart. He would follow him to the fields and pull grass from the fence corners, bringing it to him, and would carry him water from the brook. Little Ben always welcomed his friend with a peculiar

whinney, as though expecting some tempting morsel. He was a willing colt and the darkies noticed that his single-tree in the plow was always a little ahead of any horse he worked with, and he soon became a general favorite with all the negroes on the plantation.

Little Ben was now six years old, and the hard straw collar had worn the mane off of his neck where it rested, and the rough iron plow chains had see-sawed on his sides till there was no hair where they rubbed.

One night Charley Sharp happened to be in the barn late, brooding over the matter which rested so heavily on his heart, when he heard a voice. It appeared to come from Ben's stall, so he crept noiselessly in that direction, and sure enough, the little darkey was holding communion with his equine friend.

"I jes' guess yo' done plow 'bout nuff; yo' doan' do dat no mo'. We gwine fix dis race so dat po' gal doan' cry her heart out no mo'; an' po' Marse Charley looks if he neber smile 'gin. Fo' long I jes' has to tell him 'bout suffin' we knows 'bout."

The peroration ended with a low command, accompanied by the rattle of a plow chain, and

the sound of what appeared to be the horse's feet executing some kind of a double shuffle.

The young man's curiosity was aroused. What in the very mischief could the little darkey be doing? He moved so as to get a better view. Hunch heard his step, and the exhibition or whatever it was came to an abrupt termination.

Now Charley Sharp had made up his mind that the prospect of winning his bride, if it depended upon Mobile, was gloomy in the extreme. His greatest efforts and those of his trainer had failed to develop the speed he expected, while from time to time rumors were circulated of the almost miraculous performances of Starlight. It was small wonder if despondency and hopelessness seized him in a grasp it was impossible to shake off.

He approached the stall and looked over. Nothing unusual was to be seen. He spoke to Hunch and then patted the animal. What was this? The horse's sleek coat was covered with a profuse perspiration.

"What have you been doing to Ben, Hunch?" he asked.

But Hunch's plans were not quite ready yet to be revealed, so he answered readily enough:

"Nuffin', sah, nuffin'; Ben got little cramp; I rubbin' him down," and he briskly suited the action to the word.

Charley turned away, but Hunch followed him; there was evidently something on his mind, and he didn't know exactly how to set about unburdening himself. Finally he spoke:

"Marse Charley, dat hoss ob yours, he ain't no account."

This was so palpably the truth, if he was referring to Mobile, that Charley thought it useless to answer.

After a moment the darkey summoned up courage and again returned to the attack:

"Marse Charley, I say dat hoss Mobile he ain't no account nohow!"

"What makes you think so?"

"'Kase I done watch 'im—watch 'im close. He no good 'gainst Starlight." Then, getting closer to his master and looking up into his face, "Marse Charley, tell Hunch one ting—yo' want win dis race? Yo' want 'im so bad de sun he dark fo' eber mo' yo' lose?"

Good Heavens! what was the boy driving at? The question, simple at it was, had pierced a festering sore in his heart, and his only response was

a groan, but it was sufficient answer for Hunch, who proceeded :

“Fo’ Gord, Marse Charley, fo’ Gord, sah, yo’ shall win ’im; yo’ shall fo’ shuah!”

The man turned almost fiercely on the boy.

“What do you mean? What do you know about it anyhow?”

“Nuffin’, sah, nuffin’; I doan’ know nuffin’. Missy Helen she bin mighty good to some po’ darkies; I like do suffin’ fo’ her.”

“You say, Hunch, Miss Helen was kind to you?”

“Yes, sah; I rode ole Tom, de big team hoss, ober dar to borrow a bridle fo’ ole Marse Sharp, an’ ole Tom step on my byah foot an mash it awful bad, an’ Missy Helen come right out herself an’ put suffin’ on it an’ tied ’im up. She awful good to me, Marse Charley, an’ I fou’t mebbe sometime I could do suffin’ fo’ hur.”

This kindness to the little darkey showed another side of Helen’s character to him and he loved her more than ever.

Hunch had now found out all he wanted to know from his young master; his next move was to take Little Ben from the plow as he had promised the horse he’d do.

That night Hunch was seen to go to the door of his old master's house. He placed his hand upon the latch and then withdrew it, as though undecided whether to enter or not. The master, hearing someone outside, called, "Who's there?"

"Little Hunch, Massa Sharp," was the reply.

"Well, Hunch, what do you want?" the master inquired.

"Massa Sharp, I wants to tell you suffin' awful bad." Hunch all this time was opening the door very slowly and getting a little nearer to the lie he was going to tell.

"Why don't you come in, you black rascal? Come in, I say!"

"Well, Massa, I'se a comin' an' I wants to tell you suffin' awful bad."

"Well, what is it, Hunch? Out with it."

"Well, Massa Sharp, fo' Gord! Little Ben is de lamest hoss you eber se, an' I fou't you'd like to know it."

"Oh, blast that infernal plug!" the old man shouted, walking up and down. "I'll sell him to-morrow before the sun goes down!"

This was an unexpected termination of his well-laid plans, and the little darkey almost turned white. He left the old man's room with a heavy

heart and skulked off down the walk, "Little Ben's no plug; he got more sense dis bery minute den ole Massa Sharp has an' I'll show some ob dem high-toned plugs yet he can outrun dem, wid de po' white trash on dey back. Let 'im sen' a hoss buyer out here to buy Little Ben and he'll be de lamest hoss dey eber seen."

Sure enough, old planter Sharp went to town the next day and sent out a horse buyer to look at Little Ben. He told the buyer the horse was slightly lame but otherwise he was all right, and if he wanted to buy him he could have him for fifty dollars.

Hunch did not know that any definite proposition had been made to anyone for the sale of the horse, but he proposed that, if any would-be purchaser did arrive, Hunch, and no one else should be the one to show the animal. Accordingly, he watched every avenue of approach to the house, and waylaying the unsuspecting man before he had an opportunity to see the overseer, or any other authorized person, conducted him to the stables.

The buyer came and when he was nearing the barn he spied little Hunch and called to him to come and show him the lame horse that his old

master had sent him out to buy for fifty dollars. Little Hunch approached the stable with unsteady steps for fear Little Ben would fail to perform his part of the programme, as he had planned.

As the young schemer opened the stable door he walked directly behind Ben to where there was a chain plow harness hanging on a pin.

Hunch said to the buyer, "Dis is de harness wot de hoss use' to work in fo' he got too lame," and so saying he grasped the plow chains and gave them a resounding rattle. At the same time he passed quickly into the stall and released the halter strap; then in backing out he managed to forcibly collide with the chains again, and sent them banging against the wall.

Sure enough Little Ben came limping out of the stall as if he were the most decrepit old horse on earth. Hunch chuckled gleefully.

"Which leg is he lame in?" the buyer inquired.

"In boff of dem," Hunch quickly responded, at the same time giving the chains another rattle. True to his training Little Ben changed his tactics and began hobbling around on another foot.

The man looked the horse over, then pulled out a piece of money and gave it to the boy. "Now, my lad, you know all about this horse?"

"Yes sah," Hunch replied.

"Then tell me exactly what is the matter with him." The buyer evidently had a kind of suspicion that the old planter was trying to cheat him.

"If I tells yo' an' Massa Sharp foun' it out dere would be a nigger fun'ral on dis plantation, and dis 'ere nigger would be at de head ob de procession to de grabe."

"Then you mean to tell me the horse is of no use?" "No sah," Hunch replied, at the same time looking anxiously around to see if Ben had noticed what was being said of him. Then Hunch went to the door, glanced up and down to be sure no one was within hearing, and then beckoned the buyer away back to a secluded spot in the barn.

When they had reached a place which Hunch thought safe from other ears he said, "Massa! dis nigger am de biggest liar on dis plantation if dat hoss doan' hab fits."

The buyer gave the darkey another piece of money, for he thought that he had saved him from being swindled, and with a promise to Hunch not to tell anyone, he went away, saying uncomplimentary things about one who would try to sell a horse that had fits.

Now the intense earnestness of the darkey when he assured his master that he should win the race had deeply impressed the young man. He could not fathom the negro's meaning, but he resolved to watch his performances with the horse in the hopes that perhaps something might transpire to brighten his prospects. It so happened that the disappointed buyer had hardly ridden away when young Sharp entered the stable. Hunch and his four-footed friend were indulging in manifestations of joy—at least Hunch was, and we will have to suppose, from his actions, that the horse was equally interested. Neither perceived the presence of the third party. Hunch, armed with a pair of old plow chains, was walking proudly back and forth, the horse at his heels. Suddenly there would be a sharp rattle of the chains—the horse would limp as though a leg were broken; another rattle—the limp would be changed to some other foot; a swing of the arm—the horse went on his knees, or perhaps up in the air pirouetting on his hind feet. Then there would be a period of rest, during which Hunch would embrace the animal in an ecstasy of delight and Little Ben's nose would inevitably search out the reward lying hidden within the ragged depths of Hunch's pockets.

To say that Sharp was astonished at what he saw would but mildly express his feelings. Was it possible that the negro had some secret in connection with the horse? It was at best but the proverbial straw. Still, the darkey might know of something important, and as he had vowed that he should win the race, Sharp resolved to await developments with what patience he might.

As the horse buyer did not purchase Little Ben, and as the old planter was to be away for several days, Hunch thought that he had better improve the opportunity. He had succeeded in scaring one buyer off but he might not be so successful with the next, and he knew he must do something at once.

To tell his young master that he had stolen his horse out one moonlight night and run him against Little Ben, and that Little Ben had beaten him would have been the height of folly. He knew his young master's pride would not admit of his either listening to or believing it for one moment. He knew he must confide in someone, but not in his master. Then he thought of Miss Helen, of how kind she had been to him. If she loved his young master he would find it out and then tell her his plans.

So one evening he slipped away over to Miss Helen's, muttering as he went, "Little Ben a plug! fifty dollars fo' a hoss dats got mo' sense dan ole Massa Sharp has!" When he arrived at the Strong plantation Helen was standing on the porch; she seemed to be lost in gloomy thoughts.

At the approach of little Hunch she went down to the gate to meet him, for she thought that possibly he had a note for her or some word from Charley Sharp—at least she hoped so.

Hunch felt guilty of doing something wrong and he approached very slowly, hardly knowing how to open the conversation or to lead up to the point he had in view. Finally Helen called to him, "Hurry up, Hunch!"

"She finks I done got a note fo' her, I guess," thought Hunch. He had upon more than one occasion been the bearer of missives between the two.

"She mus' lub 'im o' she wouldn't want me to hurry up wid de note; or mebbe dat Starlight feller is in dar an' she wants to git de note out here."

"Hunch, got a note for me?" she asked, just a little impatiently.

"No, Missy Helen."

"Anything happened, Hunch?"

"No, Missy Helen."

"Then what do you want here?"

"I wants to tell you suffin', Missy Helen."

There was something so disconsolate about the tone of Hunch's voice that the young lady immediately jumped to the conclusion that it must concern the only person in whom she was interested. Stepping quickly up to him she said:

"Hunch, tell me at once what it is."

With his coal-black eyes fixed on her face in solemn gaze, Hunch asked, "Does you lub Marse Charley, Missy Helen?"

"Oh! yes, Hunch, I do. What has happened to him?" she moaned.

"Well, den if yo' lub him doan' yo' cry, Missy Helen; he'll win the race."

"How do you know he will? Did he send you?"

"No, Missy Helen, he doan' know I come; I wants to tell yo' suffin', Missy Helen."

By this time Helen had worked herself up to a high pitch of excitement and she demanded to know his mission at once. But it was not until she had promised that she would in no event reveal the secret to Master Charley until Hunch should give his consent, that this worthy proceeded, "Well, Missy Helen, I wants to borrow fifty dollars." This so surprised Helen that she laughed outright.

"I loan you fifty dollars?"

Hunch replied, "I will pay yo' back 'fo de Fair come off shuh, its not 'fo long."

Helen thought a moment and she came to the conclusion that the darkey must know of something favorable to her and his young master or he would not have made such an extraordinary request. She knew Hunch was as faithful as he was black. Perhaps the laugh grated on the negro's tender susceptibilities; at any rate he took it as a denial and turned away. As he did so he suddenly seemed to realize all the loan meant to him; he would lose his pet horse and his young master something of far greater value. It was too much for poor Hunch, and he burst into

tears. Helen called to him, "Hunch if I loan you the fifty dollars, will you pay me back sure?"

"Shuh, Missy Helen, 'fo de Fair comes off."

"If I let you have it, will you tell me what you are going to do with it?"

Hunch, his face beaming with delight at the change in his fortunes, said that he would. She went into the house and soon returned with the money, saying as she gave it to him, "Now, Hunch, you hold some kind of a secret, and I believe it interests me."

"Yes, Missy, it does. You see, Missy Helen, ole Massa Sharp want to sell Little Ben 'fo fifty dollars, an' he had a hoss buyer ober dar an' I tole 'im de hoss was lame an' he didn't took 'im, an' I wants to gib de money to ole Massa Sharp an' tell 'im de man will come fo' de hoss after de Fair am ober."

"Hunch, what on earth are you going to do with that plug at the State Fair, where all the fastest and most beautiful horses will be?"

"Missy Helen, please doan' call Little Ben a plug. Missy Helen, I jes' wants to ax yo' a question—do yo' lub young Marse Charley?"

"Yes, Hunch, with all my heart; but what is that to you, Hunch?"

"Well, if yo' lubs 'im I wants yo' to hab 'im, an' dat high-toned plug ob his will neber win yo' at de race."

"You think not?"

"I know he can't."

"Well, Hunch, what has the fifty dollars and Little Ben got to do with me and your young master?"

"Missy Helen, fo' Gord! Little Ben can beat Starlight."

"What!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, he can."

"How do you know?" Helen inquired, and as she thought of all it might mean to her she began to tremble and her voice choked.

"Doan' cry, Missy Helen, Little Ben can win de race, fo' Gord he can."

"Tell me, how do you know this?"

"Listen, den, doan' tell anyone now, will yo'?"

"No, I won't, Hunch," Helen promised. She was willing enough to make any promise, for she knew from what Charley Sharp had told her that

his horse had not developed the speed he expected he would have done under a professional trainer and rider.

"Well, Missy Helen, I know'd Marse Sharp's horse was slo' on de track, fo' I watched 'im, an' one moonlight night when Marse Sharp was ober har I stole de high-toned plug out, and I rode 'im an' anudder nigger rode Little Ben. We took dem out on de track an' got an eben start, an' jes' laid de whip on de high-toned plug, but de nigger on Little Ben he jes' said, 'Hur'y up, Little Ben, hur'y up!' and yo' ought to see Little Ben run 'way from dat fine trained hoss jes' like he was standin' still."

This was bad news for Helen, for she knew Starlight was a very fast horse, and the thought of a plug horse beating him never crossed her mind. Suppose that Little Ben had beaten Mobile, it would not prove that he could beat Starlight.

"Now, Missy Helen," Hunch continued, "please doan' tell my Marse Charley, fo' he's too proud to let Little Ben run in dat race. Don' say nuffin' till I shows 'im dat Little Ben has de speed."

Helen concluded to let the little darkey have his way and see what the result would be. Hunch returned home light-hearted enough, for he felt sure now he could save his pet horse from being sold and was equally sure that his young master, when he knew of Little Ben's speed, would refund the fifty dollars to Miss Helen, as he had promised should be done before the Fair. It was necessary that Charley Sharp should own the horse which he entered in the race. He felt sure that Little Ben would be the winner, but he feared he would have some trouble with his old master over the horse.

The next morning Hunch was up bright and early and watching for his old master in the yard—for he had returned the night before. Sure enough, as Mr. Sharp saw Hunch he said, "Well, Hunch, did that horse buyer take that lame plug?"

"No, Massa," Hunch quickly replied, "he did not, but anudder man did an' he left fifty dollars wid me to gib yo' an' he said he'd call in a week or two an' tek 'im 'way." Then Hunch handed over the money. The old man looked at it, then

at Hunch, in a suspicious manner, which made the darkey feel that his ruse was discovered.

His master said, "What kind of a looking man was it who bought the horse?"

The question stunned Hunch for a minute, but he recovered quickly and replied, "Dat man didn't look like de man dat come furst fo' de hoss."

"Well, then, who did he look like?"

"I doan' know, Massa; he look like he wanted de hoss, or he wouldn't leff de money fo' yo'."

"Was he a horse buyer?"

"Well, he bought dat one, but he didn't ax if yo' had any mo' to sell."

"Well, I'm really glad that plug is sold off my hands, and here's a dollar, Hunch, for you making the sale, but see that the plug is here no longer than two weeks on this plantation."

"I will, Massa Sharp," and Hunch skipped off to the barn to tell Little Ben all about it. He fully believed the horse understood all that he said to him, for he possessed almost human intelligence, and Hunch had been with him every moment that he could for four years.

Charley Sharp happened to be in the stable as Hunch entered, and in the expectation that perhaps another trick performance would occur, secreted himself to await developments.

Little Hunch entered the barn with a half cakewalk and a shuffle, saying, "I'll show dem po' white trash dey can't come down in ole Virginny an' tell us niggers nuffin' 'bout hoss-racin'; an' if I can get Marse Charley to leab me go on de track wid Little Ben an' run wid dat high-tone plug o' his we'll make soup grease out ob dat po' white trash dat rides de hoss fo' 'im. If I beat 'im den I runs de race fo' Marse Charley an' wins Miss Helen fo' 'im. He bin mighty good to me an' I'll win dat race o' dar'll be one ob de biggest nigger fun'ral dat eber was in ole Virginny."

Little Hunch by this time had got to where Little Ben stood, and as the horse whinnied his delight at his approach and nosed his frowsy head when he got up to him, Hunch stroked his mane and said, "Little Ben, yo' jes' 'longs to me now; ole Massa Sharp has got de money fo' yo and yo' plows no mo', an' if I takes you on de

track wid any high-tone plug an' tells yo' to 'Hur'y up, Little Ben, hur'y up!' yo' must hur'y up quick an' win de race or yo'll go in de plow agin."

What young Sharp had heard puzzled him. "Hunch bought the horse and paid for him? Where in the deuce did he get the money? And he wants to run that old scrub against my beautiful horse? Well, he seems so positive I think the nigger must have a secret of some kind and I'll find it out. I won't let him know I'm here. I'll slip out, and take him out on the track with me to-day when I go, and see what there is in that old plug." Charley was something like Helen—he was willing enough to try anything now to win the race. So that afternoon when Hunch met his young master at the stable the latter said, "Well, Hunch, father tells me that plug you claim was sold."

"Yis sah; he is."

"Who bought him?"

"Marse Charley, if yo'll lemme run ober de track to-day wid yo', I'll tell yo'."

"Do you think that old plug can run?" This nettled Hunch. Drawing himself up with all the

dignity of which he was capable, he replied, "Marse Charley, fo' Gord he can beat yo' hoss, for shuh he can!"

"Preposterous! What makes you think so?"

"Will yo' lemme run wid you?"

"Yes, Hunch, get ready and we'll be off for the track."

"Hunch," his young master asked after they had mounted, "where were you last night?"

Hunch thought a moment: "I went coon-huntin' wid de Strong niggers."

"Did you see Miss Helen?"

"Yis sah."

"Did she ask about me?"

"Yis sah. She axed did I hab a note fo' hur from yo'. I tole her no. Marse Charley, she looked so good stanin' dar in de moonlight, an' de man in de moon look like he felt so'ry fo' hur, an' hur eyes jes' look like two stars in de sky wid little white clouds flo'tin' befo' dem, lettin' down little drops ob rain, when she axed me 'bout yo'."

Young Sharp turned his head so that the little darkey could not see his moistened eyes.

The two had now arrived at the training-track, and Sharp said, "To-day I shall lash my horse, and that means I'll put on the whip to get all the speed he has in him," and then laughingly added, "You can run over the track and see how close you can keep to us, but I won't agree to wait anywhere for you to catch up."

"Marse Charley," Hunch replied, "if Little Ben can't beat dat high-tone plug ob yo'rs wid-out layin' on de whip, den de man won't take 'im."

"Hunch, what do you mean? You seem to be very confident Little Ben can beat Mobile."

"Well, I'm not sartin, but I jes' wants to see."

As they toed the mark for a start his young master said, "Hunch, wake that plug up before I fire the shot for the start."

"Neber mind dat, Marse Charley, he ain't 'sleep, he jes' makes b'lieve he's 'sleep. Yo'll fin' 'im 'wake 'nuf to beat yo'r high-toned hoss wid dat po' white trash on his back."

Charley fired the shot and off they went. Little Ben, apparently without exertion, took the lead from the start. To Charley Sharp's great

surprise, his horse was distanced in the mile dash. As the riders returned Charley said, "Well, Hunch, you must tell me how you knew that you could outrun my horse."

"Marse Charley, I jes' took yo' hoss out one moonlight night an' run 'im on de track wid Little Ben, an' I rode 'im, an' he done better'n he do to-day."

"Hunch, who owns that horse?"

"I do," was the quick reply.

"Now Hunch, where did you get the money to pay for him?"

Hunch thought for a moment, "Mebbe de party doan' want yo' to know. Marse Charley, you go an' see Missy Helen to-night; she knows who lent me de money."

"Hunch, did Helen Strong lend you the money?"

"Yis sah, when I tole her I stole yo' hoss out an' Little Ben beat 'im she loaned me de money. She doan' want to marry dat highflier; he's so stiff he'd break in two if anybody hit 'im wid a snowball, an' I tink he's bin mean to Missy Helen."

The fact that Helen had advanced the money to buy the horse upon the faint hope that by some chance he might possibly win showed so plainly where her wishes lay that for a minute young Sharp was speechless. He turned his back on Hunch and walked away. Hunch was undecided as to whether he was angry or not. But presently after having mastered his emotion, he returned and simply said:

“ Well Hunch, what do you want me to do now?”

“ I wants yo’ to go ober an’ pay Missy Helen dat fifty dollars to-night, den yo’ will own de hoss an’ I will win de race fo’ yo’ shuh, Marse Charley.”

That night Charley went over to see Helen. There was much he wanted to say to her. It must be remembered that the episode of the fifty dollars was the first real intimation he had ever received of the actual state of that young lady’s feelings, and this had transpired in such a way that it was evidently intended that he should have no knowledge of it until after the race was over. With a wisdom born of his regard for both, Hunch, however, had let out the secret, and Charley’s whole soul longed for the meeting. He

knew there could be no reservation between them after the act that spoke more plainly than words.

The fine old house nestling among the trees never looked more beautiful to the young man than on that evening. The glory of the moonlight seemed to bathe the world in splendor, and deep down in his heart something was singing in unison with it all—something that made him a happier and a better man.

A long shaft of mellow light pierced the trees just by the gate as he rode up, and rested upon a slight form waiting patiently there. Charley knew intuitively who it was. The words he had intended to say flew to the four winds. He sprang from his horse and took her in his arms, and Helen forgot the days and nights of harrowing anxiety; forgot the ordeal that was yet to come; forgot, in fact, everything in the world, except the strong arms which were around her.

After a time they came back to mundane things. Charley was the first to speak.

"Sweetheart," he said, "I found out about that fifty dollars."

"You big goosey! I knew you had by the way you jumped off your horse."

"And I want to thank you. I don't think I shall ever forget what lay behind the act. Here is the money, and I am going to pay an interest on the loan which may seem out of all proportion." And he proceeded to do so.

"But Charley, what do you think of Hunch's plan? Is it at all probable that Little Ben has the speed he claims for him?"

"Well," the young man said, "of course it is uncertain; but the little horse is a wonder to me; he shows great speed and superior intelligence as well. I raced him to-day with my horse and he distanced Mobile without an effort, I will admit, and I fully believe he can beat Starlight."

At that Helen clapped her hands for joy and said, "Are you sure you want him to win?" She looked so pleading and so beautiful that Charley had recourse to his former tactics, which had been so successful in sealing her lips; then after a time, looking more serious, he said, "I would give the world to have him win you for me. But, Helen, shall I ask you to be won by a

plow horse, and a homely one at that, with the mane worn off his neck where the old straw collar has rested, and with his sides chafed bare where he has worn the plow chains? It does not seem right; I am ashamed to enter him in the race against such a beauty as Starlight, with Parks' splendid equipment for his horse and rider. I don't believe Little Ben would win with anyone riding him but Hunch, and Hunch will not change his own garb or put anything on the horse except what he has been training him in—a flimsy bridle and an old, dirty surcingle which I discarded long ago; Hunch is afraid if he puts on airs, as he calls it, he might lose the race."

Helen sweetly asked, "Charley, do you care enough for me to enter a horse and rider which can win regardless of looks?"

"Of course I do, but I don't want to humiliate you."

"It will not humiliate me," she said, "I shall be proud to sit in the grand stand and watch the race. Would you not rather lose trying than lose not trying? If you win you will save me from a tyrant's clutches. Little Hunch loves you, Charley;

he tells me you have been so kind to him, and he will win, I feel sure. He is a faithful little fellow, and if he and Little Ben win they must be cared for all the rest of their days."

So it was agreed that the little darkey was to have full charge of the race, to win or to lose.

As there was only one more week before the momentous event it was decided between Helen and Charley that this would be the last time they would meet until after the race. That evening their parting was one which neither ever forgot. Only the great oak under which they stood and the bright soft moonlight peeping through its branches witnessed the mortal agony which wrung these two loyal hearts, for the future was dark before them.

The next day preparations began in earnest for the race. Sharp, of course, kept secret the horse he was going to enter, as he thought it best not to let it be known until the animal was led upon the track.

Finally the great day arrived. Thousands gathered from far and near to witness the most novel way ever known to decide a love affair

and at the same time to see one of the most hotly contested races ever witnessed, as in this case the fastest horse was sure to win, and it had been decided by the judges to permit but two entries in the race.

There were many comments made by the people before the horses made their appearance relative to their speed and beauty. All freely admitted that they were both beautiful, but there could be but one conclusion as to the result of the race, and that was that Starlight, Allen Parks' horse, would win, unless Mobile had increased very much in speed since the last race.

The track was just a mile around, and a horse to win must run three times around, or three miles, with a rest after each mile, winning two heats out of the three.

The grand stand was placed some three hundred feet back toward the circle of the track, and the large amphitheater was packed to overflowing.

A few moments before the time announced for starting the horses Helen Strong, the belle of old Virginia, was escorted to the grand stand by

her father, where she could see the whole performance. She was a tall, golden-haired girl; her large eyes were serious, with those strange dark spots in them which really made them beautiful. Ordinarily she was a trifle pale, but her face had a trick of lighting up with a rare smile which made her wonderfully attractive. To-day her cheeks were flushed with excitement and her lips had a pathetic curve of fear that had never rested on them before.

Allen Parks was the first of the participants to arrive and he was followed by Starlight, his rider and a suite of attendants.

Then after a few moments had elapsed people naturally began to look around for the other entry. Where was Charley Sharp? Where was Mobile? Neither had as yet appeared and the waiting crowd grew impatient. At this instant Hunch walked out on the track and took his place before the judges' stand. An old grain sack was thrown over his shoulders; behind him meekly followed Little Ben.

Hunch was a familiar figure to almost every one there, and when he paused expectantly before

the judges, yells went up from the near-by crowd: "Hello, Hunch! what are you going to do with that plug?" The darkey turned and faced the packed audience, and with a look on his face no one had ever seen before, his black eyes gleaming, said, "I'se gwine to win de race." A cyclone roar went up from the crowd and someone called to him, "Better have the thing weather-boarded." "Where did you get that cow?" came from another, while jeers and hoots were hurled from all directions. But they might as well have been thrown at a stone wall as at Hunch, who turned again to the judges' stand, laid down the old sack he was carrying and remarked that he was ready.

"Ready for what?" one of the judges asked.

"Fo' de race."

"Well, where is your horse?"

"Here's de hoss."

"What, that thing to run against Starlight?"

"Dis, gen'lemen, is de hoss dats to beat de high-tone plug wid de po' white trash on his back."

That was the first intimation Allen Parks had that Mobile was not to run in the race, and he at once formally protested against the entry of Little Ben, declaring that it was an intentional insult to him, and that, in any event, Sharp must appear and stand sponsor for his horse. The judges recognized the force of the argument and sent for Charley. When he stepped out before them to acknowledge the entry there was something about his pale face and determined bearing which awed the crowd; the hoots and catcalls ceased. Parks had no alternative but to accept the issue, yet, as he turned to his followers he said, in a sufficiently loud tone to be overheard in the grand stand, "I shall soon be in a position to make young Sharp regret this insult." And she for whose ear it was intended shuddered.

Comparing the appearance of the two horses, their riders and equipments, it did seem very much like an intentional affront to Allen Parks. His horse was a beautiful light chestnut sorrel, high-headed and a lofty-looking fellow. His bridle and saddle were of the latest improved racing pattern, and his rider was dressed in all

the colors of the rainbow; taking it altogether they made a handsome picture with their score of attendants.

Little Ben had, as previously described, only a common bridle on his head and an old surcingle around his body, just back of his forelegs, with a handloop on each side of the center of his back. Hunch stood there looking as he had for many months past on the plantation—barefooted and bareheaded, with the same old ragged pants with the deep pockets that he had worn many a day while training his faithful horse. No amount of persuasion could induce him to change, for he said Little Ben knew him best that way, and if he fixed up and put on a new bridle and saddle, "he may scar' an' not min' me, an' I wants to win de race. I doan' care what folks say, I on'y wants to win for Missy Helen and Marse Charley, an' den Little Ben will plow no mo'."

All this time remarks could be heard from the crowd in the amphitheater and along the fence that separated them from the track, such as:

"That is the kind of a horse I'd get if I was going to run a race for a wife," speaking of

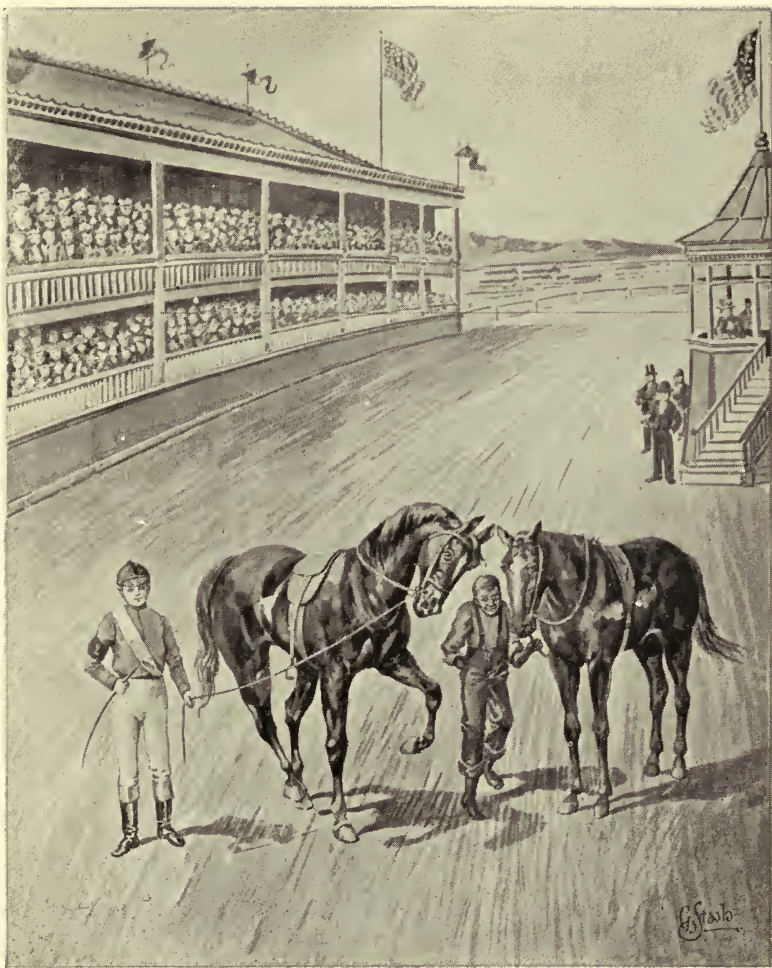
Starlight. "Well, you'd never win her," another would reply; "some one is going to be fooled on that little horse, you mind if they don't."

An old man, apparently a stranger, standing there listening to the comments, but with his eyes intently fixed on Little Ben, turned to a disputative neighbor and said:

"The horse the darkey has is built for running; look at his length and his straight flat strong legs; look at his shoulders and hips," and then turning his glasses upon the horse he scrutinized him more closely, and moving about nervously said in an excited tone, "He'll win! he'll win!"

"The darkey don't look much alongside the other rider," said one, on whom the gaudy trappings had had the desired effect. Another remarked, "Never mind about that nigger, he'll win the race." "Never!" came from a third party.

All this time Hunch, utterly oblivious to the opinion of friend or foe, was holding a conversation with Little Ben. He seemed to be giving him instructions just as one would do with a man, and the little horse seemed to understand



Horses and riders ready for the race.



him too, and pulled at the deep pockets in the darkey's pants and rubbed his nose on his bare head, as if to assure him that his injunctions would be faithfully obeyed. True to the characteristics of the Southern women, Helen sat there in plain view of the great throng brave and determined, yet her every breath was a prayer for the success of her ragged protégé.

"All in readiness for the first heat!" the judge called.

Starlight's rider was assisted to mount, with two stalwart men holding on to the mettlesome horse, prancing with impatience to be away.

Little Hunch saw this move and crossing the track sprang upon a bench which stood beside the grand stand. Here he stood for an instant calmly and deliberately surveying his opponent's actions, and then, placing his fingers to his lips, uttered a shrill whistle. Ben instantly wheeled over to the bench, allowed the negro to scramble on his back, which he did with the agility of a monkey, and then made for the starting line, where he stopped. This clever maneuver created some concern in the mind of Allen Parks and he

cautioned his rider not to be caught napping by the darkey, as the horse was a total stranger and might give him more trouble than he anticipated. The darkey's coolness brought forth cheers from the crowd which somewhat comforted Helen.

"First heat!" shouted the judge, "Ready—one, two, three!" The pistol cracked and the horses were off.

"Away they go, Starlight in the lead!" Helen exclaimed, as she leaned breathlessly forward over the rail with her glasses to her eyes. "All is lost!" she cried, "Little Ben is no match for the sorrel," and unable to endure the sight she turned her head away.

A great hush fell on the crowd. Eager and expectant, every eye followed the flying animals. Suddenly a shout rent the air—it grew into a roar. "The little horse is gaining. See! See! He is a beautiful runner!" Helen threw her glasses upon the horses again just as they passed the half-mile post, in time to see Little Ben leap forward and come up neck and neck, while Starlight's rider plied his whip vigorously.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “see the dear little horse dash forward at the last quarter; Starlight is crowding him to the fence. Why don’t Hunch use the whip? Two hundred yards, nose and nose! He can’t win! He can’t win! A hundred yards—Oh!” she exclaimed. Then those who were within ear-shot of the horses thundering down the home-stretch heard Hunch call aloud just once, “Little Ben!” and the gallant little horse responded with a spurt which sent him under the wire half a neck ahead of Starlight, while the pent-up feelings of the multitude burst forth in mighty and prolonged cheering for the little horse and his coal-black rider.

The strange old planter who had predicted Ben’s victory was wild with excitement and enthusiasm. Regardless of rules he sprang over the fence and went to the grand stand, looked the horse over very carefully, and held a few minutes’ conversation with the little darkey.

The crowd cheered Helen, and she bowed a sweet acknowledgment of the honor.

Parks was simply dumbfounded. He had nothing more to say about the insult offered him by

putting such a looking plug in the race, but going to the judges told them his horse had not let his speed out, but would in the next heat. Miss Helen heard this and so did Hunch; and they also heard Starlight's rider instructed to win the next race or kill the horse.

Hunch said in an undertone, "Better kill de plug now, fo' he neber win de race."

Then the sable jockey retired to the friendly bench, while his steed, closely following him, began to nose in his pockets for his customary reward.

There were no spurs, whips or attendants for Little Ben, for the jealous little darkey would not allow anyone to touch him.

Allen Parks' arrogance in front of the grand stand added still more to Helen's disgust of him, and she realized more than ever before that the day was a turning-point in her life.

Charley stayed out of sight, as Helen had requested, but every little while he would send her missives of encouragement, which she read with apparent delight. He told her she was as brave as she was good, and the sympathy of the

multitude was with her; that the little horse was a wonder, and he was sure he would win.

"Second heat!" the judges called. The contestants toed the mark. "One, two, three!" the pistol cracked, and the horses are off again. Starlight leads from the start; as they go, Little Ben is a length behind. Now they reach the half-mile stake, Ben's nose to the girth; now they swing on the home-stretch, but Hunch was either purposely holding him back or was unable to get the speed he had obtained in the first heat.

"Little Ben will lose! he will lose!" Helen exclaimed in dismay. And so he did, for the horses passed under the wire with Little Ben one length behind. Hunch sprang from his back and fished out of the old sack, with his black, monkey-like hands, a piece of plow-chain about two feet long; this he held up before the horse and rattled it sharply. Little Ben went lame in an instant.

Then the unsympathetic crowd, forgetful of the triumph of the first heat, yelled, "The plug is gone in; now he's done for, the race is too long for him," accompanying their remarks with howls of derision, hoots and jeers.

Some one asked Hunch what he was going to do with that chain. "Oh! I'se gwine to hang myself if I doan' win de nex' race."

Poor Helen cried bitterly, and little Hunch ran to the grand stand and making his way to where she sat, with his eyes luminous with seriousness and his hands clasped, thus pleaded with her:

"Doan' cry, Missy Helen, doan' cry; Little Ben will win de race, 'fo Gord! Missy Helen, Little Ben will win."

Helen said, "Oh, no, he can't, Hunch, he's lame."

Hunch approached closer and said in an undertone, "No, Missy Helen, he no lame, he only mek b'lieve."

"Well then, why did he not win this heat?" "I didn't tell Little Ben to hur'y up, if I tells 'im to hur'y up he hur'y up, shuh he will. Doan' cry, Missy Helen, he'll win o' dis nigger 'll neber come in alibe."

The old man who had taken so much interest in the horse now appeared, and taking Hunch aside, held a few minutes' conversation with him.

Hunch was heard to say, "He doan' get started under a mile." The kind-hearted planter went back to where Helen sat and said to her, "About four years ago I sold off all the stock on my old Kentucky plantation, and among the horses was a little runty, two-year-old colt that brought only twelve dollars. His sire was a full-blooded Arabian racer and his mother a Morgan; she was killed by a falling tree when the colt was about two weeks old. That little colt had a hard time all through his life, but he seems to have survived it, for that horse now on the track is he," pointing to Little Ben. "I'll wager a thousand dollars he wins in the next heat."

The smile which broke over Helen's tear-stained face amply repaid the old gentleman's kindly efforts, while the little darkey who had heard the conversation made faces at the crowd and gave a few steps of a cake-walk that brought forth rapturous applause.

Just as they toed the mark for the third and last heat, Allen Parks stepped up to Starlight's rider and said, in his usual domineering manner, "Mind you, you must win this heat in any

manner or at any cost." He was beside himself with rage at the unexpected speed and staying qualities of Little Ben, and sorely puzzled at his sudden lameness and its equally quick cure.

"Third heat!" the judges roared. The horses toed the mark. "One, two, three!" the pistol cracked, and they were off again. Neck and neck they pressed onward, while up rose a cloud of old Virginia dust that almost hid them from the sight of the anxious onlookers. Helen leaned forward over the rail, her fingers convulsively clutching her field-glasses, every nerve strained to its utmost tension in her efforts to discern which was in the lead and to catch any word the gentle breeze might float back to her. The two riders urged their horses on; the clank of steel-shod hoofs beat out clear and rapid. Starlight's rider laid on the whip from the start, and was almost a length ahead of Little Ben at the first quarter stake.

Then Hunch leaned forward as though he was saying something to Little Ben, and with a spurt he came up with his nose to Starlight's girth. "See! See! They are neck and neck! Little



The finish of the third heat.

Ben is flying—there, they turn the three-quarter point! Oh!” exclaimed Helen. The crowd shouted, “Starlight’s rider has hit Little Ben on the head with his whip. See!”

The horses rear and plunge against each other. Another shriek from the crowd. Starlight’s rider pulled the frail bridle off Little Ben and threw it to the ground. “See! See! Little Hunch has lost his balance!” shrieked Helen. “He will fall! He will fall! There,” she cried, “he has caught both hands in the surcingle loop and is lying flat on Little Ben’s back.”

Helen turned her head away with a sigh. Young Sharp buried his face in his hands, and Allen Parks walked to and fro in a haughty manner. The multitude in the amphitheater silently settled back in their seats chagrined and disappointed, as their sympathies were with Helen.

“Here they come again like mad!” was shouted from thousands of throats, as they thundered down the home-stretch. Three hundred yards—two hundred yards—now nose to nose. “Can Little Hunch hold out?” Helen exclaimed as he seemed about to fall from the horse’s back. It

was then the gentle breeze of old Virginia tossed back to Helen, in Hunch's pathetic tone of voice, "Hur'y up, Little Ben! hur'y up!" At those words the little horse dashed forward like a shot from a gun and passed under the wire, half a length ahead of Starlight, with eyes and nostrils dilated and red as blood, and little Hunch fell to the ground stunned.

Little Ben turned and trotted back to where his rider's prostrate form lay, and rubbed his lips all over his dust-covered face and nosed in his deep, ragged pockets. And now the crowd yelled itself hoarse with cheers and applause as they saw a slim girl dart from her seat in the grand stand, run rapidly down the stairs and out on the track, where tender hands raised little Hunch and cared for him. As his faculties slowly returned the first words he uttered were, "Hur'y up, Little Ben! hur'y up!" Helen and Charley, both of whom were with him, told him the result of the race, and he sank back satisfied, saying, "Oh, Marse Charley, Missy Helen, I'se glad! I don' tol' yo' Little Ben'd win 'im. Fo' Gord, he would, shuh." Then young Sharp and Helen,

hand in hand, led Little Ben from the track amidst the wildest cheers ever heard in old Virginia.

The rough, iron plow-chains chafed Little Ben's sides no more; instead, he drew a beautiful carriage for those for whom he had made the race of his life, and little Hunch looked after him until old age called them both to the great Hereafter, and they were tenderly laid away in those grand old Virginia mountains.



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